

Batsford Chess Library

# Beating the Caro-Kann

Vassilios Kotronias



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## Contents

Bibliography	7
Symbols	8
Introduction	9
A Brief History	11
<b>1 Ideas in the Advance Variation</b>	<b>13</b>
a) The Centre	13
b) Flank Activity	18
c) Strongpoints and Piece Exchanges	22
d) Manoeuvres	26
<b>2 The 4 ... e6 5 g4 Qg6 6 Qge2 Variation</b>	<b>31</b>
Game 1 Vasiukov-Razuvaev, UISSR 1981	31
Game 2 Minasian-Miles, Moscow GMA 1989	34
Game 3 Kotronias-Sax, Burgas-Elenite 1992	37
Game 4 Marjanovic-Campora, Nis 1985	41
Game 5 Nagel-Wouters, corr. 1988	46
Game 6 van der Wiel-Icklicki, Brussels 1985	52
Game 7 Timman-Seirawan, Hilversum (4) 1990	55
Game 8 Kotronias-Campora, Moscow 1989	59
Game 9 Timman-Karpov, Belfort 1988	62
Game 10 Timman-Seirawan, Hilversum (2) 1990	66
Game 11 Kotronias-Speelman, New York 1990	74
<b>3 The 4 ... ♖b6 Variation</b>	<b>79</b>
Game 12 Nimzowitsch-Capablanca, New York 1927	79
Game 13 Kotronias-King, New York 1990	82
Game 14 Kotronias-Khalifman, Moscow 1987	86
Game 15 Kotronias-Tukmakov, Kavala 1991	88
<b>4 The 4 ... h5 Variation</b>	<b>92</b>
Game 16 Nunn-Dlugy, London 1986	92
Game 17 Short-Seirawan, Rotterdam 1989	94

<b>5 The 4 ... ♖d7/c8 Variation</b>	97
Game 18 van der Wiel-Hort, Wijk aan Zee 1986	97
Game 19 Kotronias-Skembris, Athens (4) 1987	99
<b>6 The 3 ... c5 Variation</b>	102
Game 20 Tal-Botvinnik, Moscow Wch (8) 1961	102
Game 21 Shabalov-K. Arkell, London Lloyds Bank 1991	104
Index of Complete Games	108
Index of Partial Games	110
Index of Variations	111

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### Acknowledgements

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## Symbols

+ -	White is winning
±	White is clearly better
±	White is slightly better
=	The position is equal
∓	Black is slightly better
∓	Black is clearly better
- +	Black is winning
+	Check
#	Mate
!	Good move
?	Bad move
!!	Excellent move
??	Blunder
!?	Interesting move
?!	Dubious move
OL	Olympiad
Ch	Championship
IZ	Interzonal
Z	Zonal
corr.	Correspondence

## Introduction

Books on openings usually end up in a dusty corner in one's library, especially nowadays. The reason is that chess theory develops like a monstrous creature, bombarded by computer information containing tens of thousands of games. Unlike good old times, main lines change with lightning speed and paths thought to be forgotten provide raw material for the experts. In fact there is nothing wrong with modern informatics, because chess is a scientific game and has to go on like that; the negative aspects of it are revealed when one spurns what is essential for the sake of 'ephemeral wisdom', and that characterizes many players of the new generation.

When I started writing this book, I understood the need to emphasize the ideas governing an opening variation. Therefore these ideas are presented separately (Chapter 1), since I think they form the most valuable part of the whole material; but the main reason is that the readers should be able

to get a general picture of the various motifs that would help them evaluate a certain position. If they manage to do so, the purpose of this book will be fulfilled.

Chapters 2 to 6 feature the current status of theory in the variation suggested. An effort has been made to cover all gaps and present a complete repertoire for White. This doesn't mean I lost my objectivity; on the contrary, a reappraisal was made in positions previously dismissed as clearly bad for Black. From this point of view, this book can serve as a useful guide for those who wish to update their archives and spot the critical positions. Emphasis has been given in supportive analysis, a necessary tool for one's homework, and I hopefully expect it will prove so, combined with the introductory ideas.

As usual in the Batsford series of "*Beating the ...*" books, the material is presented in the form of complete games with all theoretical analysis incorporated in the

notes. In this way the reader is presented with the most important links connecting the opening with typical middle-game positions and even the endgame. My selection was based mainly on the criterion that these games should exemplify White's strategy in the Caro Advance as well as possible. The book also contains some of White's remarkable failures, but I could not help including them as they are interesting from both a competitive and creative point of view. My main selection criterion for the games included in this book was the strength of

the players, but care was taken not to leave out of this survey any games that might be interesting or theoretically important.

I hope that the material will prove to be stimulating and provide food for thought for those who wish to discover new ways of playing the variation with either color. For those who wish to be creative not only at the chessboard but also at home, I think the lines suggested are most suitable. After all, confidence in one's repertoire depends to a certain extent upon one's own personal analysis.

## A Brief History

### About the Caro-Kann in General

The Caro-Kann Defence was introduced into serious competition by the German players H. Caro and M. Kann in the last decades of the nineteenth century. As one might expect for an opening whose first principle was solidity, initially it was not greeted with great enthusiasm from the majority of chess fans. Nevertheless, its intrinsic merits soon caught the attention of some of the world's leading masters and it has been championed by many top players throughout the last hundred years. No less a player than Capablanca used it to good effect on several occasions, beating some of the most eminent grandmasters of his era with his customary virtuosity. A classic example, featured in this book, is his game against Nimzowitsch played in the New York super-tournament of 1927. A few years later Soviet GMs Botvinnik and Flohr took over, their scientific treatment of the game doing much to enhance

the opening's popularity.

Since then, the Caro-Kann has been one of the main weapons in most World Champions' opening armoury. Botvinnik, Smyslov, Petrosian, Karpov and, occasionally, Kasparov have successfully defended the Black side, especially in matches at the highest level. I suspect this choice was not at all by chance, as the "Caro" is easier to play than the Sicilian, the Spanish or even the French, especially if Black is satisfied with a draw. However, the asymmetrical pawn structure which arises after 1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3  $\text{♞c3}$  dxe4 means that Black can also play for a win, on the condition that he will accept a slightly worse position by avoiding liquidations during the early phases of the game.

### Advance Variation

The Advance Variation (3 e5) is the most natural way to sidestep Black's drawing tendencies and was seriously tested for the first time in the World Championship match between Tal and Botvinnik in 1961. Tal's

result with it was rather disappointing (as was his whole performance) and this was probably responsible for the line's abandonment in the next twenty years. The line was revived in the game Hort-Seirawan, Bad Kissingen 1981, which, however, resulted in a brilliant win for Black. Whilst one might have expected this to have caused the revival to be stillborn, in fact the opposite was the case and it soon became apparent that Black could not hold his own in the hair-raising complications after 3 ... ♖f5 4 ♘c3 e6 5 g4!? ♗g6 6 ♘ge2 c5 7 h4 cxd4?! 8 ♘xd4 h5 9 f4!. Later on, Black devised ways of improving his play by deviating on the 7th move and by now the attention of White players has switched to more positional (and safer) paths.

Over the past decade, the above mentioned system (starting with 4 ♘c3 e6 5 g4!?) was mainly championed by the Dutch GM and twice Candidates' finalist Jan Timman. He contributed a lot to its development with many interesting

novelties, but in most of the games he failed to reap the fruits of his labour since some positions are easier to play with Black, even if he stands objectively worse! This might seem a bit discouraging to the average player, but one should not forget that the primary purpose of chess analysis should be to heal our weaknesses rather than improve our strengths.

My personal experience with the variation, especially the alternative 4 ... ♗b6, taught me that one should not trust results but only objective analysis. I started playing the Advance in 1986; at the time nobody would accept that 5 ♗d3!? could lead to some sort of game for White. Today, I think that the move is worthy of an !? and tomorrow - who knows? - the evaluation might change again. On the strength of the analysis presented in this book, it is my firm belief that 4 ♘c3 is at least equal to the alternatives and I hope that readers will add their own contribution to the history of this topical opening.

## 1 Ideas in the Advance Variation

The Caro has long been considered one of Black's main defences against 1 e4. World Champions Capablanca, Botvinnik and Karpov have been its regular practitioners, which speaks itself for the soundness of the system and its particular merits: solidity, clarity and controlled aggression. Contrary to the typical French Defence scenario, the light-squared bishop can develop freely along the c8-h3 diagonal and the struggle is of an open nature with clear-cut aims.

The Advance Variation is characterized by the move 3 e5, partly closing the centre. In that sense it is not a typical Caro-Kann and might cause discomfort to players whose main attraction to the opening was its simplicity. Also, Black is denied the traditional counterplay along the d- and (possibly) g-files as well as the square f6 for his knight's development.

In comparison with the French Advance, Black has acquired the privilege of developing his bishop on f5. How-

ever, this does not automatically mean that he has also managed to solve all his opening problems: he is a tempo down in the fight for the center with the break ... c5 and the bishop's position might turn out to be vulnerable. The purpose of this section is not to give concrete evaluations regarding these questions, but to examine typical situations with a view to helping readers in their assessments.

### The Centre

The situation in the centre is always a major factor, defining the character of the chess struggle. In our case, the Nimzowitsch' pawn structure (d4, e5 for White, e6, d5 for Black) means that White will have to meet the thrusts ... c6-c5 or ... f7-f6 to his center and shape accordingly his own plans. These involve f2-f4-f5, hitting the base of Black's pawn chain, as well as expansion on the kingside with gains of time on the enemy bishop.

Sometimes White exchanges the light-squared bishops in

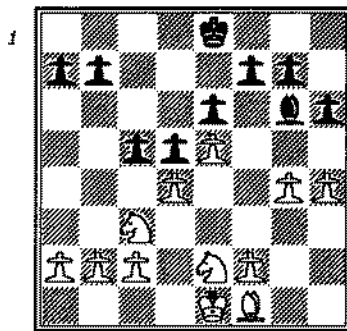
return for a space and time advantage. Then his proper reaction to Black's central thrusts differs; it has to do more with piece manoeuvring rather than pawn storms.

Before going on, it should be noted that the main object of this book is to analyse positions where White develops his queen's knight on c3. Although White is deprived of the possibility c2-c3, fortifying his centre, he receives a lot of compensation in the form of quick development and excellent attacking chances.

Short's way of treating the position (♞f3 and ♕e2), although by far the most solid one, does not put Black under pressure right from the start. Therefore, it is a useful weapon only for those who wish to avoid complications at an early stage. It is outside the spirit of this book to suggest such a line, since it does not comply with the general directions of battling the Caro-Kann as they have already been described above.

In this part of the book, I wish to take a close look at various general situations White may encounter in practice. Here I have taken some liberties with the diagrams in order to add more emphasis to pawn structures and their transformations.

In our first diagram, Black



has chosen to attack the base of White's chain by ... c6-c5. It seems that this thrust is more effective here than in the French, as the bishop stands actively on g6 while White's centre lacks the protective c2-c3. However, appearances can be deceptive. White does not necessarily have to reinforce d4 with a pawn; a knight would be very strong there. In addition, Black has spent two tempi to get his pawn to c5 and its partner on e6 lacks the valuable protection a 'bad' bishop could provide. Not surprisingly, this invites White to attack with f2-f4-f5.

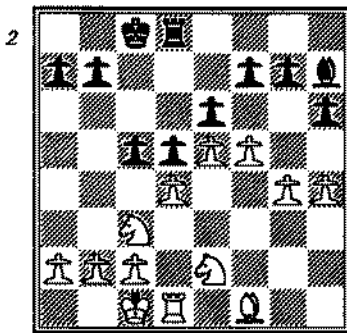
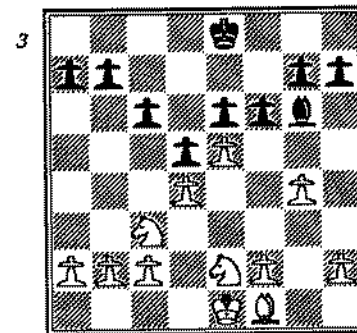


Diagram 2 shows the results

of a correct White strategy: the f-pawn has achieved the shutting in (even temporarily) of the black bishop, while putting e6 under serious pressure. The pressure can be increased by moves like ♞e2-f4 or ♕f1-h3, as captures on f5 weaken decisively the d5 pawn. Black's only chance is to strive for counterplay on the queenside by means of ... c5-c4, ... b7-b5 etc. (see also the section 'Flank Activity').

It goes without saying that an early ... c5xd4 favours White since his pieces become active and the thematic pawn advance f2-f4-f5 gains in strength.

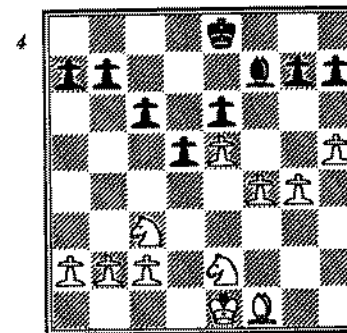
Now we shall proceed to examine positions where Black challenges White's central superiority with ... f7-f6. Such a position can be seen in diagram 3.



Black's choice has a two-fold purpose: to create a mobile pawn-mass in the centre and simultaneously provide a safe spot for his bishop on f7. From that square the bishop also guards the newly-created

weakness on e6, albeit at some cost in mobility.

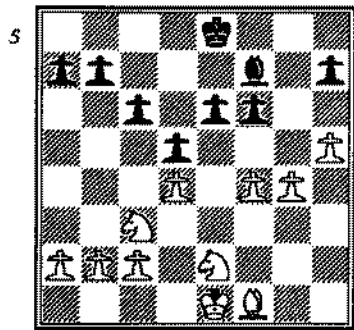
A typical structure often arising in practice is the one presented in diagram 4.



Black has achieved his aim of obtaining a pawn preponderance in the centre as White took back on e5 with the d-pawn. This is, however, better than f4xe5 which deprives White's position of its dynamism and leaves the e-pawn practically isolated, ... c6-c5 not being far away. White should now hurry to redeploy his knight to f3 via d4, preventing the positional threat ... g7-g5. If he fails to stop it, Black's bishop will be out for good after the forced recapture h5xg6 e.p.

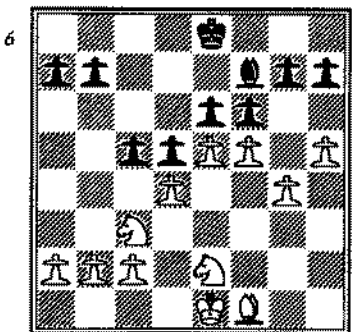
Sometimes Black delays taking on e5, thinking that he has all the time in the world at his disposal. This is a risky strategy and White can take advantage of it by a timely capture on f6.

In the resulting positions (similar to diagram 5) White



has the better pawn formation and a potential passed pawn on the kingside. Black's e-pawn is backward, but advancing it creates a hole on f5 for White's knight. These factors in conjunction with a slight space advantage guarantee White the better game.

A doubtful experiment is when Black combines both pawn breaks, hoping to liquidate White's centre and finally occupy it. In that case, White should opt for a general liquidation that would make his development tell. A position like diagram 6 comes to mind.



As usual, the energetic advance of the f-pawn has

played an important rôle in the realization of White's plans. The central wall is falling apart, it only remains to be seen whether Black's exposure is of fatal dimensions.

So far we have only looked at positions with light-squared bishops on the board. Exchanging these bishops seems anti-positional for White, but it can be justified if Black weakens his kingside or neglects his development. After all, White's remaining bishop is not that 'bad' if one compares its present mobility to its black counterpart. What White players should be aware of, is the potential danger of drifting into a passive ending, especially if the position in the centre stabilizes.

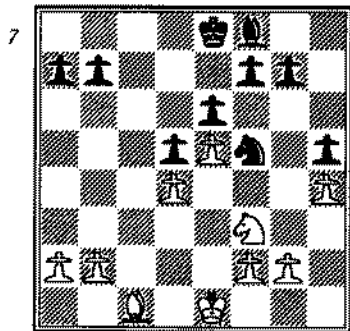
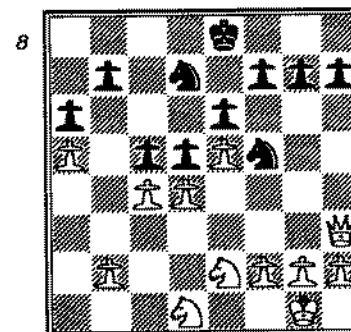


Diagram 7 features such an ending, with White having the inferior bishop and a permanent weakness on d4. This kind of endgame might be tenable, but it is obviously not in one's interests to suffer for a draw as White.

The new situation without light-squared bishops demands a slightly different approach but basically the principle is the same: open up the position when you have the chance! This means that White should avoid answering ... c6-c5 with c2-c3, as that would lead to a fixed central structure, identical to the one in the previous diagram. The pawn on d4 would be a constant worry, while the attack usually fails without the king's bishop.

Counterattacking by f2-f4-f5 is difficult to achieve since Black can intensify his control on f5 by ... g7-g6 and ... h7-h5 in combination with ... g8-e7. This is the main difference from previous examples, when Black could not organize a similar defence, as the bishop on g6 was standing in the way.

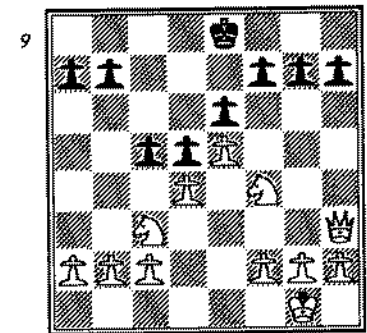
A typical reaction to ... c6-c5 after the exchange of the light-squared bishops can be seen in the following diagram:



The knight has retreated to d1 in order to free the way for

the c-pawn. White's queen stands excellently, pressing towards the kingside and at the same time indirectly helping central operations, since ... d5xc4 could be met with d4-d5. Also important is the preventive rôle of the pawn on a5, which stops the consolidating ... d7-b6. In general, White's position holds good prospects for the coming complications.

If White is not prepared to answer ... c6-c5 with c2-c4 he should opt for the modest approach of capturing on c5 and playing with his pieces on the kingside (diagram 9).



After d4xc5, f4-d3 strengthens both e5 and f2. The knight from c3 can be redeployed via e2 to the kingside, with good attacking chances. A final remark is that the ... f7-f6 break has been rendered more weakening than usual after the exchange of bishops. So Black avoids it unless White gets completely reckless.

Here, our examination of various central motifs comes to



an end. Evidently, it is difficult to cover all cases, but I think that the examples given are quite representative of what White should aim for, and what he should try to avoid.

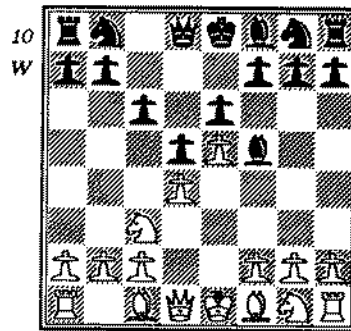
### Flank Activity

Space is, undoubtedly, the most double-edged element in the game of chess. Unlike tempi or material, rules cannot be made about its relative value and everything depends upon the placing of the pieces. Therefore, the players' ability to evaluate each specific situation is of paramount importance.

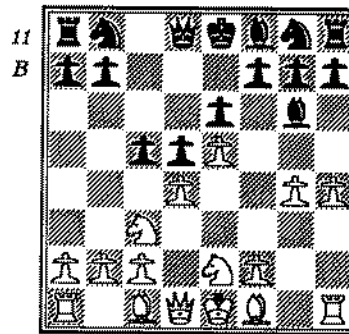
Regarding the Advance Caro, there is an important axiom related to the value of space: the side with more space in the centre can operate on either flank with greater ease. This axiom is confirmed repeatedly in this variation, as most flank attacks are launched by White.

White's kingside expansion is a standard method of flank activity and characterizes many lines of the variation as a whole. It is grounded on the fact that Black's bishop on f5 provides White with enough tempi for its realization, and has the two-fold purpose of restricting the bishop's mobility as well as inducing weaknesses in the opponent's pawn formation.

Diagram 10 features the starting position of White's



attack. After the bold g2-g4, forcing the retreat ... Qf5-g6, comes the aggressive follow-up with Qg1-e2 and h2-h4 (III).



In this position, which we may consider as a *tabiya* for this opening, White is poised to answer the positional shot ... h7-h5, with Qe2-f4, either winning a pawn or ruining the enemy pawn formation. Besides this risky attempt, Black can choose between:

- a) ... f7-f6, hitting the centre at the cost of weakening e6;
- b) ... c5xd4, enforcing ... h7-h5 by diverting the knight's attention from f4; and
- c) ... h7-h6, giving up some space, but avoiding positional

concessions.

We have already witnessed during our discussion of central motifs, that as a rule White reacts properly to his opponent's plans by advancing his f-pawn. Cases (a) and (c) were partly covered there, while a brief comment was made on the negative aspects of possibility (b).

Evidently, it is impossible to examine wing operations separately from central affairs, especially when they have a decisive impact on each other. Thus, in the following we shall concentrate on positions with crystallized central structures, such as can be derived from options (b) and (c).

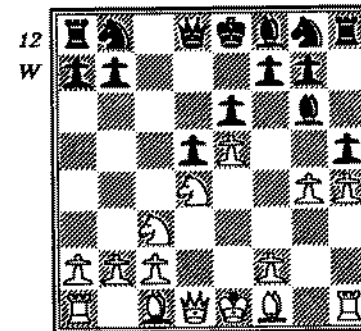


Diagram 12 features the starting position of a forced sequence, with White resorting to tactical measures in order to prove the viability of his system.

Black has just played ... h7-h5, hoping to turn White's kingside demonstration into a meaningless one. Were White

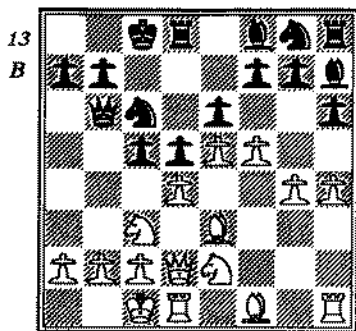
now to play g4-g5, his attack would be stopped dead in its tracks leaving a gruesome weakness on f5 as its only recollection. However, the newly established knight on d4 allows White a strong, albeit familiar, advance.

1 f4! hxg4 2 Qb5+ Qd7 3 f5! Qxh4 4 Qf1! exf5 5 e6

The complications are definitely in White's favour, as is demonstrated in Game 5, Nagel-Wouters and the extensive analysis included therein.

In the above example, White had to rely solely on tactics to avoid falling into an inferior position. The disadvantage of Black's idea was that he conceded the square d4 to the white knight with loss of tempo, thus relaxing the central pressure and creating a strong base for White's operations. Black may deny White using this square by a timely ... c5-c4, especially when both sides castle long. Then, relaxing the central pressure is more justified as the resulting pawn phalanx points menacingly at the white king.

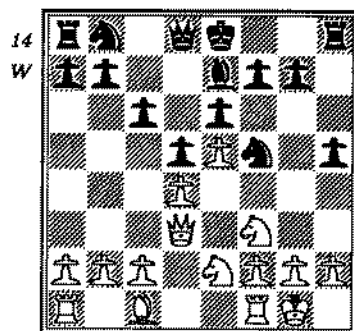
In diagram 13 Black is ready for a massive assault on the queenside by ... Qb6-a6 and ... b7-b5-b4. White's pawn already stands on f5, so Qe2-f4, intensifying the pressure on e6, seems appropriate: it normally results in the pawn reaching f7 after Black sacrifices (cor-



rectly) both e- and f-pawns. Since releasing the h7 bishop adds yet another weapon to Black's armoury, White must be aware that investing a piece would rather be necessary if he wants to stave off the mating threats. As is customary for such races, play becomes highly unbalanced; nevertheless the pawn on f7 might prove an important long-term asset (for a detailed analysis see the second match game Timman-Seirawan, Game 10).

If the light-squared bishops have been exchanged, White obviously lacks a target for an analogous expansion on the kingside. However, the bishops' absence allows White to carry out a different plan with a view to gaining space on the other wing. Take for instance the case of diagram 14:

Here the conditions are ideal for White to achieve his aims. Black has spent too much time creating a strongpoint on f5, thus neglecting the mobilization of his queenside. White

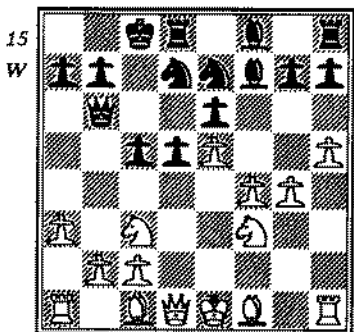


can take advantage of this by playing ...

1 b3! ♖d7 2 c4 ♜f8 3 ♙d2 ♜g6 4 c5±

as Black is unable during this sequence to react successfully by ... c6-c5.

Finally, an exceptional case, with White attacking on the queenside and all pieces still on board can be found in the following example:

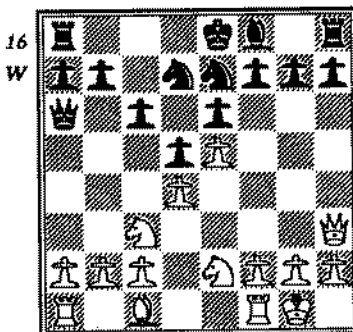


Black needs just one tempo to consolidate his central position by playing ... ♞e7-c6. White must prevent this, so the energetic 1 b4! is called for, sacrificing a pawn to open lines against the enemy king. This move has also the additional

advantage of breaking up Black's central pawn front, consequently freeing d4 for use by White's pieces. All in all, a promising attack is in sight, requiring only a tiny material investment on White's part.

So far, so good: attacking ideas have formulated the main part of our discussion. But as Nimzowitsch pointed out many years ago, chess is not only attack and defence; it is prevention and prophylaxis as well. Sometimes, White has to be modest and think about stopping Black's counterplay before going on with his own plans.

A case where flank activity has strictly a preventive rôle can be seen in the following diagram.



While it is clear that White's future lies on the kingside, he goes in for the paradoxical 1 a4. In fact this is not an attacking gesture, but a solid way to take the sting out of ... c6-c5 which would now be met strongly by ♞c3-b5. Also, White prepares

to exchange, if necessary, his inferior bishop by b2-b3, ♙c1-a3.

Certainly, Black can also try to be active on the queenside. We have already witnessed the case of diagram 13, with Black launching a dangerous attack on the white king; however, in principle queenside activity backfires if there are no concrete targets and freedom of movement in his interior lines:

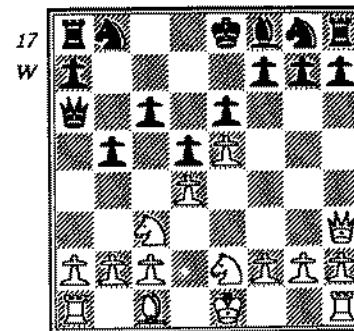


Diagram 17 features a space-gaining effort on the queenside. Black has just played ... b7-b5, thinking he will get away with it, in view of the closed nature of the position. But in fact, such reasoning is incorrect, since sooner or later ... c6-c5 has to occur and Black's demonstration will prove weakening and time-consuming.

The reader might have noticed that there was hardly any mention of White attacks on the kingside without pawns. As a matter of fact, this is a rare bird in the Advance Variation and is going to be exam-

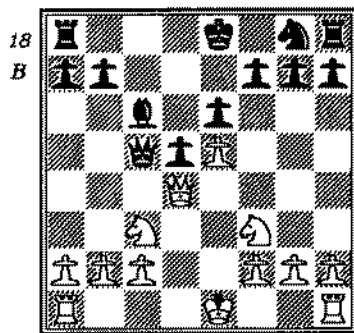
ined in the "Manoeuvres" section.

### Strongpoints - Piece Exchanges

Securing strongpoints for one's minor pieces is a common theme in most semi-open Take for example the Scheveningen Variation of the Sicilian, where it is a customary idea for Black to create an outpost for his knight on e5, in front of an isolated white e-pawn (by ... e6-e5xf4); to achieve this, he usually concedes a correspondingly strong square for White on d5. In our case, typical squares for outposts derive from the nature of the central pawn formation, and are d4 for White and f5 for Black.

It is well known that in French-like pawn structures the square d4 can become a useful base of operations for White's pieces. According to Nimzowitsch, White should always keep a firm control on d4 and e5 so that when Black tries to liquidate his central pawns these squares can be taken up by pieces. In the French hybrid of the Caro Advance, occurring after 3 ... c5?! 4 dxc5!, White has enough time to carry out these ideas, as Black has lost a tempo without causing any disruption in his opponent's development.

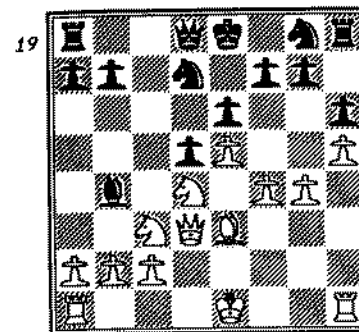
Diagram 18 features the final position of a piece of analysis



by Pachman. White has complete domination of d4 since Black has had to exchange the dark-squared bishops in order to recover his pawn. Pachman's last move (♖d1-d4) indicates his preference for a better endgame, but also acceptable is the Nimzowitschian approach, with 0-0, ♖f1-e1, to be followed by ♕c3-e2-d4. In both cases, the superiority of knight vs bishop is quite evident.

The knight on d4, apart from its blockading duties, can serve attacking purposes as well. We have already witnessed the case of diagram 12, where its function was to support the advance of White's f-pawn and simultaneously attack e6, finally resulting in a sacrificial breakthrough. Dramatic developments are not to be expected in the next example, but the knight's rôle is very similar.

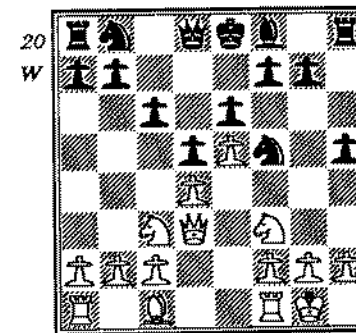
The main characteristic of this position is the inclusion of the move ... h7-h6 in Black's defensive set-up. This inspires White to attack either by push-



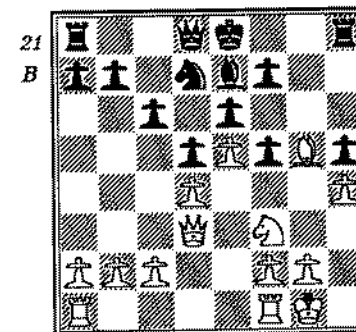
ing his pawn to f5, or by g4-g5-g6, exploiting the weakened light-square complex on Black's kingside. His knight is supremely placed for both plans, exerting pressure against the potential weakness on e6. It should be noted here that, despite the absence of the light-squared bishops, White's pawn advances are justifiable as Black cannot build the well-known defensive formation with pawns on g6 and h5.

As has already been mentioned, Black's traditional outpost in the center is the square f5. Occupation of this square by a knight presupposes an early exchange of the light-squared bishops. Black usually strengthens the knight's position by ... h7-h5, a typical case shown in diagram 20:

Black has accomplished his plan, albeit at the cost of a considerable amount of time. The knight stands beautifully on f5, but if White manages to exchange it, the disadvantages involved in ... h7-h5 will become



apparent. A thematic continuation would be 1 ♕e2 ♕d7 2 ♕g3 g6 3 ♕xf5 gxf5 4 ♕g5 ♕e7 5 h4! inflicting some permanent changes on the character of the game:

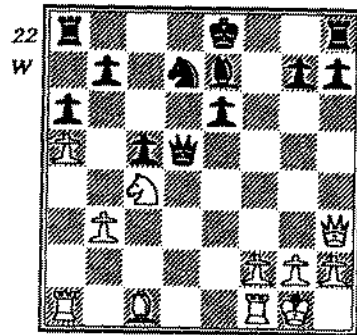


Black's outpost on f5 has disappeared, in return for the opening of the g-file. However, White's control of g5 nullifies Black's attacking chances, so what counts in the long run is the weakness on h5 as well as the insecurity of the black king. To take advantage of these factors, White should try to open up the game on the queenside as quickly as possible.

The Caro Advance is a dy-

dynamic opening, but hardly an antipositional one. Not rarely, White sacrifices a pawn at an early stage for concrete positional gains.

The following example is quite characteristic: after the moves 1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 e5 Qf5 4 Qc3 Bb6 5 Qd3 Qxd3 6 Bxd3 e6 7 Qge2 Qe7 8 O-O Qd7 9 a4 a6 10 Wh3 Qf5 11 a5 Bd8 12 Qd1 c5 13 c4 dxc4 14 d5 Wh4 15 dxe6 fxe6 16 Bc3 Qd4 17 Qxd4 Bxd4 18 Wh3 Bxe5 19 Qe3 Qe7 20 Qxc4 Bd5 21 b3 we have reached the position in diagram 22 (extensive analysis of this specific sequence is provided in Game 15, Kotronias-Tukmakov).



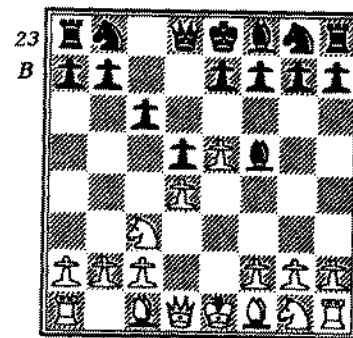
White is a pawn down, but his knight is ideally placed on c4, eyeing the weak dark squares on Black's queenside. Black's b- and c-pawns are practically isolated and his e-pawn irremediably weak. Although it cannot be claimed with any certainty that White enjoys an advantage here, it is

obvious that the burden of proof lies on Black's side.

A difficult problem one has to solve during over the board play is the question of exchanges. The main reason for this is that the relative value of each minor piece is sensitive, in view of the complicated and constantly transforming pawn structures. Mastering this subject requires the development of one's intuition, together with knowledge of some typical cases.

*A) Exchange of Light-Squared Bishops*

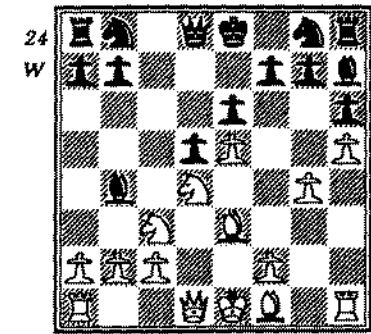
Referring to this exchange has surely become a routine, but the careful reader must have noticed the reason for such an attitude: exchanging one's own good bishop is against the principles of classical theory, so it is of major importance to explain how this is balanced by other factors. A most enlightening case occurs as early as the fourth move (see diagram 23).



The normal continuation for Black would be 4 ... e6, demanding a deep knowledge of the complications arising after 5 g4 Qg6 6 Qge2 c5 7 h4. However, if the second player is reluctant to enter this line he may try a semi-waiting move such as 4 ... Bb6 or 4 ... h5. Then 5 Qd3 becomes feasible, but only because Black was first to violate a so-called classical rule: 4 ... Bb6 commits the queen too early, while 4 ... h5 weakens Black's kingside without furthering his development. Under the circumstances it is not surprising that the 'anti-positional' 5 Qd3 should work, as after 5 ... Qxd3 6 Bxd3 Black's only developed piece is removed and White's queen is given access to the weakened sector. In fact, 4 ... Bb6 creates no weaknesses in the structural sense, but the queen's absence from the kingside will probably make itself felt later on.

Exchanging the light-squared bishops is also justified if White has induced a favourable fixing of Black's kingside pawns. A relevant case appears in the following situation (diagram 24).

White plays 1 Qd3 in order to get rid of the annoying bishop on h7. After 1 ... Qxd3 2 Bxd3 the position is similar to diagram 19, Black's weaknesses being vulnerable not only in the resulting middle-



game, but in an ending as well.

*B) Exchange of a Strongly Placed Knight*

This is another recurring theme, as Black quite often establishes his knight on f5 in order to halt White's kingside aggression. White normally tries to exchange it, diagrams 20 and 21 featuring the starting position as well as results of such an effort. For more details see the next section.

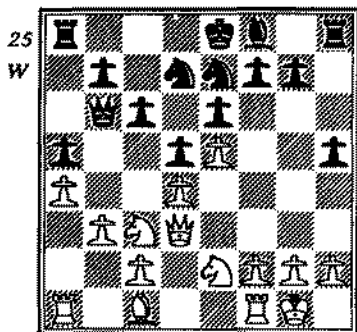
*C) Other Exchanges*

Sometimes, Black gives up his dark-squared bishop for a white knight on c3. Like its distant relative from the Winawer, this exchange aims at a weakening of White's pawn structure, hoping to exploit it at a later stage. Under specific circumstances Black may succeed, but in general the fortification of White's centre, in conjunction with the usual time advantage he enjoys in the Advance Caro, allows him to exploit the bishop vs knight



advantage.

Finally, ideas for White to trade his inferior bishop are not always out of the question, diagram 25 offering a typical example.



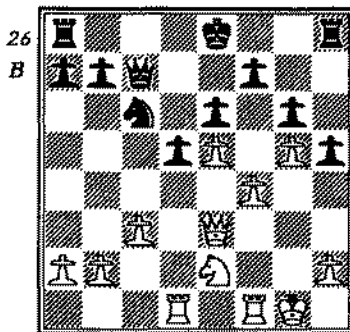
White can play 1 Qa3 (1 Qg5 is better, but only for tactical reasons - see the analysis of Kotronias-Orr, included in Game 15) carrying out the strategic plan already outlined during the discussion of diagram 16. Exchanging this bishop means that he will not have to worry any more about drifting in a worse ending, albeit at the disadvantage of easing Black's cramp a little.

### Manoeuvres

The Caro Advance is an opening variation noted for its dynamism and versatility. There is no manoeuvring in the traditional sense, as the whole board is in an almost permanent state of flux and in almost every game we witness a body-to-body fight between the two armies. Thus, there are

no concrete positional targets in most of the sharp lines arising in the Advance Variation and this explains the lack of standard manoeuvres, contrary to openings such as the Tarrasch Defence in the Queen's Gambit, the Sämisch Variation of the Nimzo-Indian, etc.

The only lines where play takes a more or less positional character are those arising after an early exchange of the light-squared bishops. These positions require a different kind of approach, since the customary pawn storms would now fail to impress Black; his position is sufficiently solid to meet this kind of activity by setting up a successful blockade on the light squares. If White underestimates this fact he will soon run out of play on the kingside, as in the classic game Nimzowitsch-Capablanca, New York 1927:



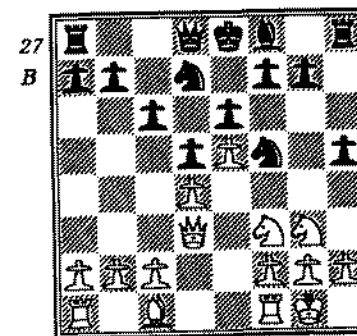
White's careless demonstration has ended up in a complete strategic disaster. Black has not only conquered the square

f5 for his knight but, more importantly, has turned the tables as far as king safety is concerned. After 1 ... 0-0 2 Qd4 Bb6 3 Bf2 Bfc8, Capablanca went on to win by penetrating through the c-file (the whole game is extensively analysed later on as Game 12, with some significant suggestions about misconceptions that have endured for decades regarding its opening stages).

Similar accidents are to be avoided if White understands the needs of the position for piece manoeuvring. Most of these manoeuvres aim at challenging Black's control of the f5 square, while others are associated with the idea of exerting pressure on Black's kingside.

In diagram 20 we made our first acquaintance with the above-mentioned type of manoeuvre. White resorted to Qc3-e2-g3 which, as it turns out, has a two-fold purpose: to unblock the c-pawn for central action and to underline the weaknesses created by the move ... h7-h5. This manoeuvre signals the start of Black's difficulties, as after the normal continuation 1 Qe2 Qd7 2 Qg3 he has to make a positional concession:

In the diagrammed position, Black is faced with the unpleasant dilemma of either opening up the f-file for White



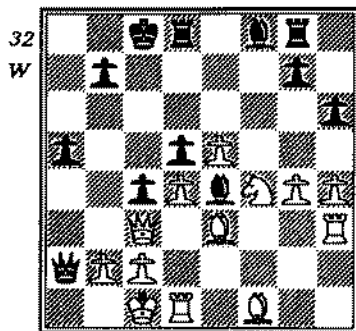
by 1 ... Qxg3 2 fxg3, or allowing the weakening of his pawn structure after 1 ... g6 2 Qxf5 gxf5. The first choice is clearly inferior as 1 ... Qxg3 2 fxg3 Qe7 runs into 3 h4! with a dangerous attacking position for White. In that case the shortcomings of ... h7-h5 become particularly felt, since the g5 point turns into a fearsome base of operations in White's hands.

The lesser evil is 1 ... g6. After 2 Qxf5 gxf5 3 Qg5 Qe7 4 h4 we reach a position that has been briefly discussed under diagram 21.

White's manoeuvre has paid off well, as he has obtained a firm grip on the kingside. Black's only counterplay is based on the fact that the guard of the g-file has been removed and an avenue towards the white king has been opened, but the plan ... Qd7-f8-h7 would be too slow to enjoy realistic chances of success. In the meantime White may generate play on the queenside, a



line, resulting after 6 ... c5 7 h4 h6 8 Qe3 ♗b6 etc. The main purpose of such a manoeuvre in these cases is defensive, a characteristic example being the following one. (32):



This position could have arisen in the game Prasad-Ravi, India 1991. Play had begun 1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 e5 Qf5 4 ♘c3 e6 5 g4 Qg6 6 ♗ge2 c5 7 h4 h6 8 Qe3 ♗b6 9 f4 ♘c6 10 f5

Qh7 11 ♗d2 0-0-0 12 0-0-0 c4 13 ♗f4 ♗a6 14 fxe6 ♗b4 15 exf7, and now 15 ... ♘xa2+? 16 ♘xa2 ♗xa2 17 ♗c3 Qe4 18 fxg8 ♗xg8 19 ♖h3 a5 would have reached the diagram.

Black has sacrificed a piece for what seems to be a virulent attack, but the rook on h3 proves its defensive value. After 20 Qg1 Qb4 21 ♗a3! Qxa3 22 ♖xa3 White repulses all threats, entering an easily won ending.

At this point Chapter 1 of this book comes to an end, but it should be well digested before proceeding further: the ideas presented here are essential for a proper understanding of the opening lines suggested in the rest of the book.

## 2 The 4 ... e6 5 g4 Qg6 6 ♗ge2 Variation

In the past few years the Advance Variation against the Caro has been seen more and more often at top level chess. GMs Timman, Short, Anand and Nunn have been its main adherents. Their results have been mixed, but on the whole, I think, White has satisfactory play.

The system characterized by the move 4 ♘c3 has recently fallen out of favour. However, a decline in popularity is not always the result of any fault of the opening: in this particular case the new plan with ♘g1-f3, Qf1-e2 has scored well in practice, and consequently the attention of most Advance devotees has been drawn away from the 'old' line. I believe that such a tendency is not justified in terms of objective thinking. The variations starting with 4 ♘c3 are extremely rich in possibilities and definitely constitute the sharpest method available in White's arsenal. Black has to be superbly prepared in order to weather the storm at the early stages, but even that could prove insuffi-

cient against someone who has delved deeper into the intricacies of the position.

### Alternatives to 6 ... c5 (Games 1-4)

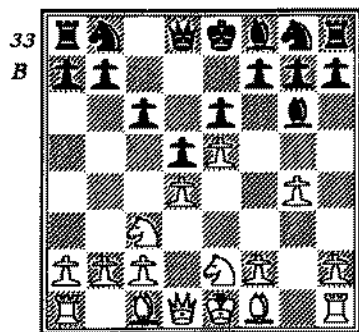
#### Game 1 Vasiukov - Razuvaev USSR 1981

1	e4	c6
2	d4	d5
3	e5	Qf5
4	♘c3	e6
5	g4	

With 5 g4 White declares his intentions for a complicated fight: he plans a development of his knight to e2, followed by a massive advance of his king-side pawns. The point of such a strategy lies in the insecure position of Black's bishop which White should exploit by either forcing Black to accept a weakness in his pawn structure or by gaining enough time to build a space advantage.

5	...	Qg6
6	♗ge2 (33)	
6	...	Qb4?!

The most usual continua-



tions 6 ... f6 and 6 ... c5 are illustrated extensively in subsequent games. Other moves have failed to bring Black joy:

a) 6 ... ♗h4?! 7 Qe3! (sacrificing the pawn as on 7 ... ♗xg4?!, 8 ♗d2 to be followed by 9 0-0-0 gives excellent compensation; worse is 7 ♗f4 ♗h6 8 h3 ♗b4 9 ♗d2 ♗d7 10 ♗ce2 Qxd2+ 11 ♗xd2 ♗e7 as played in van der Wiel-Timman, Brussels SWIFT blitz 1987) 7 ... ♗h6 8 Qxh6! gxh6 9 ♗g3 Qe7 10 f4 f6 11 Qg2 and Black's position is riddled with weaknesses, Blumenfeld-Kasparian, USSR 1931.

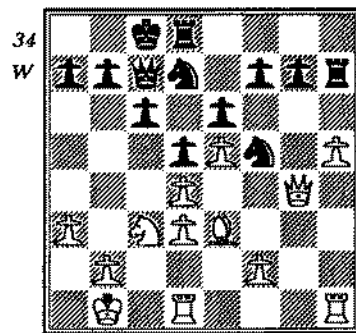
b) 6 ... Qe7!? is analysed extensively in Game 2, Minasian-Miles.

c) Finally, 6 ... h6 7 h4 c5 transposes to 6 ... c5.

7 h4

Interesting, but probably inferior to the text is 7 a3!?, despite White's success in the game dos Santos-Wallace, Guarapuava 1991, which continued 7 ... Qxc3+ 8 ♗xc3 h5 9 h4 hxg4 10 ♗xg4 ♗e7 11 h5 ♗h7 12

Qd3 Qxd3 13 cxd3 ♗f5 14 Qe3 ♗d7 15 0-0-0 ♗c7 16 ♗b1 0-0-0 (34)



17 ♗xd5 ♗xe5 18 ♗xf5 exf5 19 ♗xc7 ♗g4 20 ♗b5 cxb5 21 ♗c1+ ♗d7 22 ♗c5 ♗e6 23 Qg5 f6 24 ♗e1+ ♗f7 25 ♗c7+ ♗g8 26 ♗f4 ♗xf2 27 ♗e7 ♗xd3 28 Qd2 ♗xh5 29 ♗xg7+ ♗h8 30 Qc3 ♗f4 31 ♗xb7 a6 32 ♗gf7 ♗d5 33 Qa5 ♗e8 34 ♗bd7 f4 35 Qd8 f3 36 Qxf6+ ♗xf6 37 ♗xf6 ♗h1+ 38 ♗a2 ♗h3 39 d5 ♗g8 40 ♗g6+ ♗h8 41 ♗f6 ♗g8 42 ♗df7 ♗d8 43 ♗xf3 ♗xf3 44 ♗xf3 ♗xd5 45 ♗f6 a5 46 ♗b3 ♗d3+ 47 ♗c2 ♗d5 48 ♗a6 ♗f7?? (Black could have drawn with 48 ... a4) and White won on move 63. Despite the final result, it is clear that 7 h4 is a much safer move than 7 a3. With the latter, White adopted a risky strategy involving many pawn weaknesses and Black's play could certainly be improved upon.

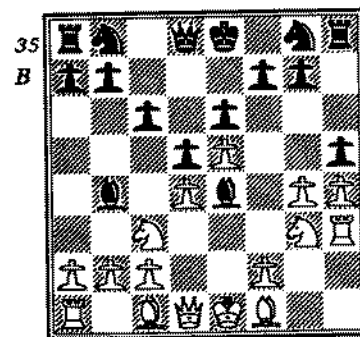
Another move that has been essayed by White in this position is 7 ♗f4, but it does not seem to be particularly dangerous. The game Djurhuus-

Fossan, Stavanger 1989, continued 7 ... ♗e7 8 h4 h6 9 h5 Qe4 10 f3 Qh7 11 Qd3 ♗d7 12 Qd2 ♗c7 13 Qxh7 ♗xh7 14 ♗ce 2 Qxd2+ 15 ♗xd2 c5 16 c3 0-0-0 17 ♗d3 ♗c6 with an equal game.

7 ... Qe4  
8 ♗h3 h5?!

A dubious experiment. According to Vasiukov, Black should have been content with the modest 8 ... h6. In the next few moves White takes advantage of Black's adventurous play in simple and powerful fashion.

9 ♗g3! (35)



9 ... c5

In the game Lee-Pieterse, Dieren 1989, Black varied with 9 ... hxg4 10 ♗xg4 ♗e7, getting a good position after 11 ♗h5? ♗d7! and the game ending as a draw after 12 Qd3 Qxd3 13 ♗xd3 ♗f5 14 Qg5 Qe7 15 ♗f3 g6 16 ♗f6+ ♗c7 17 0-0-0 ♗d7 18 ♗f4 ♗xf6 19 exf6+ Qd6 20 ♗g4 ♗c8 21 ♗h3 ♗h5 22 ♗e2. Yet I find it hard to believe 9 ... hxg4 is good, as White may

continue (instead of 11 ♗h5?) 11 ♗xe4 dxe4 12 ♗xe4 ♗f5 (what else?) 13 Qg5! and Black is in dire straits. For example, after 13 ... ♗xd4? there follows 14 ♗xd4 ♗xd4 15 0-0-0, while 13 ... Qe7 also fails after 14 0-0-0 Qxg5+ 15 hxg5 ♗xh3 16 Qxh3 ♗xg5+ 17 f4.

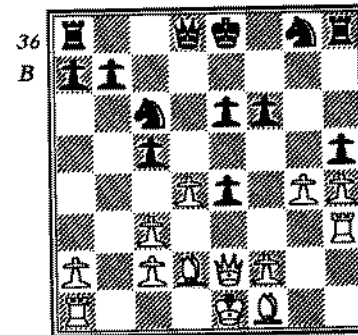
10 Qg5 f6

Practically forced; if 10 ... ♗b6 11 a3! and now:

a) 11 ... Qxc3+ 12 bxc3 hxg4 13 ♗xe4! gxh3 14 ♗d6+ ♗f8 15 ♗b1±; or

b) 11 ... hxg4 12 axb4! gxh3 13 dxc6±, according to Day.

11 Qd2 Qxc3  
12 bxc3 ♗c6  
13 exf6 gxf6  
14 ♗xe4 dxe4  
15 ♗e2 (36)



White's superiority is evident. He has two far-ranging bishops and Black's central pawn formation is loose. 15 ... f5 16 gxf5 exf5 16 ♗c4! is very unpleasant for Black, so he has no choice but to sacrifice his front e-pawn.

15 ... ♗d7



16 ♗xe4 0-0-0

Vasiukov adds a question mark to this move and proposes instead 16 ... hxg4 17 ♗g6+ ♗f7 18 ♗xg4 0-0-0 as a better try. However I cannot see how Black defends after 19 Qc4 f5 20 ♗e2 ♗e8 21 ♗e3 ♗xh4 22 0-0-0. In fact, the ugly 18 ... f5 might be the sole chance of holding on.

17 g5!

From now on White's game plays itself, as Black has no real counterplay on either flank.

17 ... Qge7

In a bad position every move is bad and the same applies here, as on 17 ... f5 White's reply 18 ♗d3! (preparing to meet 18 ... Qge7 with 19 ♗c4) leaves no doubts about the final outcome. Black can hardly open up the position with 18 ... cxd4 or 18 ... e5, since in both cases his knights would be no match for the powerful white bishops.

18 gxf6 Qf5  
19 ♗d3 cxd4  
20 cxd4 ♗hg8  
21 Qg5 Qb4  
22 ♗d2 Qb8  
23 ♗b1 Qd5  
24 c4

Preparing to double rooks on the b-line. Normally one would sacrifice material to achieve such a position, but here White is two pawns up!

24 ... Qb6

25 c5 Qd5  
26 ♗db2 Qa8  
27 f7 ♗xf7  
28 Qxd8 ♗xd8  
29 ♗xb7 ♗f6

On 29 ... ♗xb7 there follows 30 ♗xb7 ♗xb7 31 ♗x6 Qxd4 32 Qa6+ Qa8 33 ♗f7, mating quickly.

30 ♗d3 1-0

Black resigned as he cannot meet the threat of mate starting with 31 ♗xa7+.

Game 2  
Minasian - Miles  
Moscow GMA 1989

1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 e5 Qf5 4 Qc3 e6 5 g4 Qg6 6 Qge2 6 ... Qe7

This is Miles' pet line, with which he has suffered a number of reverses. Black wants to prevent h2-h4 even at the cost of impeding the development of his king's knight; in fact, Black hopes that he will be able to exploit the weak side of 6 g4 by ... h7-h5, after which his knight can be deployed to f5 via h6.

7 Qe3

Besides the game continuation, the following options are possible for White:

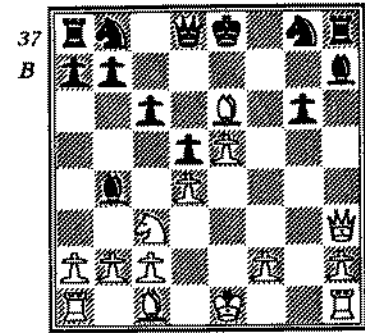
a) 7 Qf4 c5 8 dxc5 d4 9 Qxg6 hxg6 10 Qe4 Qxc5 11 Qxc5 ♗d5 12 Qxb7 ♗xh1 13 Qd6+ ♗f8 with an unclear position in Nunn-Chandler, Wiesbaden 1981.

b) 7 Qg2 Qd7 8 0-0 h5 9 Qf4 hxg4 10 Qxg6 fxe6 11 ♗xg4 Qf8 12 Qe2 Qh6 13 Qxh6 Qxh6 14 b3 Qa3 15 ♗ab1 a5 16 c4 ♗h4 17 h3 ♗xg4 18 hxg4 g5 19 f4 gxf4 20 Qxf4 Qe7 21 Qh5 ♗g6 22 ♗f4 Qg5 23 ♗f3 Qh6 24 ♗b1 Qh7 25 cxd5 cxd5 26 Qf4 Qxf4 27 ♗xf4 ♗c8 28 ♗f2 ♗c1+ 29 Qf1 Qg5 30 Qg2 Qd7 31 Qb5+ Qc7 32 Qd3 ♗h6 33 ♗c2+ ♗xc2+ 34 Qxc2 ♗h8 35 Qg6 Qd7 36 ♗f1 ♗h6 37 Qb1 ♗h4 38 Qg3 ♗h3+ 39 Qf4 Qf7 40 Qg6 Qd8 41 Qg5 ♗h8 42 Qh5 Qe7 43 Qg6 ♗f8 44 ♗c1 Qc6 45 Qxg7 ♗f4 46 g5 ♗xd4 47 g6 Qxe5 48 ♗c7+ Qd6 49 ♗xb7 ♗d2 50 ♗b6+ Qe7 51 ♗b7+ Qd6 52 Qh6 Qxg6 53 Qxg6 ♗xa2 54 Qe8 e5 55 Qg5 ♗g2+ 56 Qf5 ♗f2+ 57 Qg4 e4 58 ♗d7+ Qe6 59 ♗d8 Qe5 60 Qc6 ♗g2+ and ♭-♭ in van der Wiel-Miles, Ter Apel 1987.

Nunn's 7 Qf4 is logical and clearly more testing than 7 Qg2, but Minasian's move looks more flexible than both these alternatives.

c) 7 Qh3!? (a suggestion from the author; the idea behind this weird-looking move being to support the advance f2-f4-f5) 7 ... h5 (critical but risky; however after 7 ... Qb4 8 Qg3 planning a2-a3 and 0-0 White keeps a slight advantage, while 7 ... Qd7 8 f4 Qb4 (or 8 ... Qh4 9 Qg3 threatening f4-f5) 9 0-0 ♗h4 10 Qg2 h5?! 11 g5! Qe7 12 Qg3 leaves the black queen imprisoned in enemy territory)

8 Qf4 hxg4 9 Qxg4! Qh7 (9 ... Qf5? 10 Qxf5 exf5 11 e6±) 10 Qxe6!? (10 ♗g1!? is also interesting) 10 ... fxe6 11 Qxe6 Qb4 12 ♗h5+! g6 13 ♗h3 (37)



White's attack is more than enough compensation for the missing piece. Therefore, researchers should turn their attention to the continuation 11 ... Qh4!? 12 ♗g1!, the consequences of which are unclear.

7 ... Qd7  
8 ♗d2 h5  
9 Qf4 hxg4  
10 Qxg6 fxe6  
11 Qd3

Another option here is 11 h3 Qf8 12 0-0-0 ♗a5 13 a3 b5 14 Qa2 ♗xd2+ 15 Qxd2 a5 16 Qc1 ♗f7 17 Qd3 ♗h4 18 Qg2 Qh6 19 hxg4 ♗xg4 20 Qf3 ♗h4 21 ♗xh4 Qxh4 22 ♗h1 Qe7 23 Qe2 Qf5 24 Qg4 b4 25 a4 Qd7 26 ♗c1 from Kamsky-Miles, New York 1989, where White had good compensation for the pawn but probably not more than that, despite the final outcome: 26 ... ♗h8 27 c3 b3 28 c4 Qb6 29 cxd5 cxd5 30 ♗c7 ♗c8 31 ♗b7 Qxa4

32 Qxf5 gxf5 33 Qg5 Ee8 34 Qd2 Ec8 35 Qxa5 g5 36 Qb4 Ee8 37 Qd6 Qf8 38 Exb3 Qxd6 39 exd6 Ed8 40 Eb4 Qxb2 41 Exb2 Exd6 42 Eb8+ Qe7 43 Eg8 g4 44 Eg7+ Qf6 45 Eg8 Ea6 46 Qe5 Ea4 47 Eg6+ Qe7 48 Qe3 f4+ 49 Qd3 Ea3+ 50 Qd2 Ea4 51 Qc3 g3 52 fxc3 fxc3 53 Qd3 Ea3+ 54 Qe2 Eb3 55 Qf1 Qf8 56 Qg2 Eb4 57 Eg4 and 1-0.

11 ... Qf8

Black's idea becomes apparent: this knight will defend the weak pawns, enabling the rest of his pieces to take up important posts on the king-side (principally the other knight on f5). Since the fight usually revolves around the mutual weaknesses existing there, a successful blockade by Black would automatically grant him significant winning chances. However, it is impossible to achieve these aims if White plays energetically.

12 0-0-0

Interesting is 12 Qe2!? which deprives Black of the option given in the next note. Although this lets Black develop his knight to h6 without the preliminary ... Ehh8-h4, this might not be significant after 12 ... Qh6 13 0-0-0 Qf5 14 c4!? when it's not clear how Black can profit from the omission of the rook move.

12 ... Ehh4

12 ... Qh6? would be met by

13 Edg1 or 13 h3, with a clear advantage for White in both cases, for example, after 13 h3, Zapolskis - Furdzik, Chrudim 1992 continued 13 ... gxf3 14 Ehx3 Eg8 15 Qxh6 gxf3 16 Eg1 Qd7 17 Ehx6 Qe8 18 Qf4 Qc7 19 Qe2 (± Zapolskis).

However, in preparing ... Qg8-h6, Miles misses a chance to prevent the knight manoeuvre that follows. According to Dokhoian, it was possible to play 12 ... Qa5!? 13 Edg1 Ehh4! with an unclear position, although even here Zapolskis' 13 Qe2 casts doubt on this assessment, e.g. 13 ... Ehh4 14 f3! gxf3 15 Qxf3 Qh6 16 Qf2 Qg5+ 17 Qb1 Ehf4 18 Qg2 Qd8 19 Qe2 Eg4 20 Qf3 Qe7 21 h3 Eg5 22 Qe3 Ehf5 23 Qxf5±, or 13 ... Qb4 14 Qd2 intending a3±.

13 Qe2!± Qh6

14 c4 Qf5?

Another Dokhoian suggestion here is 14 ... Qd7 15 cxd5 cxd5 16 Qg5 (16 Qa5!?) 16 ... Qxg5 17 Qxg5 Qe7 18 Qxg6+ Qd7. After Miles' error, White is winning.

15 Qf4 Qf7

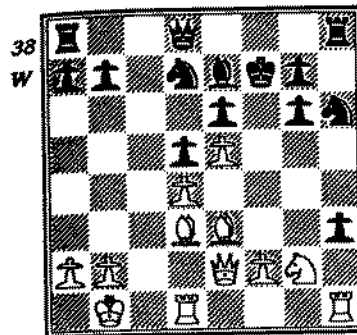
16 Qb1 Qd7

17 cxd5 cxd5

18 Qg2 Ehh8

It is evident that Black's troops have become disorganized in the last few moves. The fact that he has to play such moves as 16 ... Qd7 and 18 ... Ehh8 speaks fluently about the failure of his strategy.

19 Qe2 Qh6  
20 h3 gxf3 (38)



21 Qxg6+!? Qxg6  
22 Qf4+ Qf7  
23 Qh5+ Qg8  
24 Qxe6 Qe8?

A better defensive try was 24 ... Qb6. Black's congested pieces cannot provide their king with real protection.

25 Edg1!+- Qf8

26 Qxh3 Qf7

27 Qf5 Ec8

28 Ehx8+ Qxh8

29 Qxg7 Qxg7

30 Qh6 Ec1+

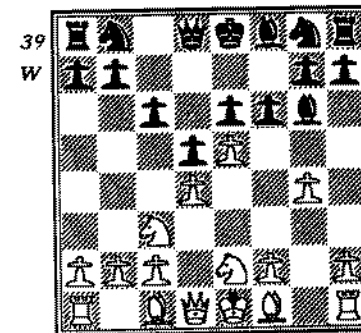
31 Qxc1 1-0

Game 3

Kotronias - Sax  
Burgas - Elenite 1992

1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 e5 Qf5 4 Qc3 e6 5 g4 Qg6 6 Qge2 6 ... f6!? (39)

This is the main alternative to the most usual continuation 6 ... c5. Black provides his bishop with a retreat square on f7 while hitting White's central pawn wedge.



7 h4

7 Qf4 was supposed to be the main line but my research indicates that it's probably worse than 7 h4. Known to theory is 7 ... Qf7 8 Qe2!?, from Timman-Anand, Amsterdam 1992, which gave White an edge after 8 ... fxe5 9 Qxe5 Qd7 10 Qe2 Qe7 11 Qd3 Qg6 12 h4! (the position is much better for White, according to Timman) 12 ... Qxd3 13 Qxd3 e5 14 Qg5 Qf7 15 0-0-0 Qd6 16 dxe5 (Timman considers this second-rate, suggesting 16 Qg3!) 16 ... Qxe5 17 Qe2 Qf3! 18 Qxf3 (!? by Timman, who offers instead 18 Qe1!? Qxh1 19 Ehd5! Qc7!-) 18 ... Qxf3 19 Qe3 Qh6 20 Qe4 (!? again by Timman) 20 ... Qe5 21 Qg5 Qxg5 22 hxg5 Qxg4 23 Qd3 g6 (now Black ought to win) 24 Ede1 0-0 25 Qc5 Efe8 26 Ehh4 b6 27 Ehx4 bxc5 28 c3 Eab8? (the immediate 28 ... c5-c4 would have given Black a clear advantage) 29 Qc2 c4 30 Qxc4 dxc4 31 Ege4 Ehf8 32 Qxe5 Exf2+ 33 Ete2 Qxe2+ 34 Exe2 Eb5 35 Eg2 Qf7 36 Eg4 Ec5 37

Qd2 Qe6 38 Qe3 Qe5+ 39 Qd4  
Qe2 40 Qxc4 Qxb2 41 a4 Qf5 42  
Qg1 and ½-½.

The reason I did not choose this line against Sax is that Black can respond with 7 ... fxe5! and now:

a) 8 Qxe6 Qe7 9 Qxf8 exd4+ 10 Qe2 dxc3 11 Qxg6 hxg6 (11 ... cxb2?! 12 Qxb2 hxg6 13 Qd4 led to an initiative for White in Efimov-Vdovin, USSR 1980) 12 Qd3 Qf6 13 Qxc3 Qbd7 14 Qe3 Qe4 was unclear in Nunn-Andersson, London 1982;

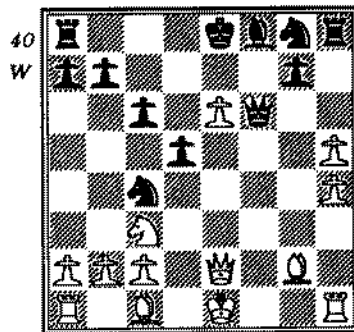
b) 8 Qxg6 hxg6 9 dxe5 Qd7 10 Qf4 Qc5 11 Qd3 Qe7 12 Qg3 Qc7 13 Qa4 a5 14 Qd2 b5?! (14 ... Qb4! 15 c3 b5 16 cxb4 axb4! 17 Qc3 bxc3 18 Qxc3 Qa4+ van der Wiel) 15 Qxc5 Qxc5 16 Qg5 Qh6 17 Qe3 Qxd3+ 18 cxd3 c5 19 Qcl Qc8 20 0-0 and ½-½ in Sax-Korchnoi, Tilburg 1989;

c) 8 dxe5 Qf7 9 Qe2 (9 h4 Qd7 10 Qd3 h5 11 Qg5 Qa5 12 Qd2 Qc7 is also unclear, Kinley-Friedmann, England 1980) 9 ... Qd7! (risky is 9 ... c5 10 Qcxd5! exd5 11 e6 Qg6 12 Qxg6 hxg6 13 Qf3, Fabri-Carpati, corr. 1983, with White obtaining a strong initiative for the sacrificed material) 10 h4 Qc7 11 Qd3 h5! (the best, since after 11 ... c5 12 Qcxd5?! Qc6 13 Q3f4 0-0-0 (13 ... Qe7 14 Qg2 Qxd5 15 Qxd5 exd5 16 e6±) 14 Qh3! exd5 15 e6 Qxe6 (15 ... Qe8 16 Qe3) 16 Qxe6 Qxe6+ 17 Qxe6 Qe8 18 Qe3 d4 19 Qe2 White keeps a slight edge) gaining perfectly satis-

factory play, e. g. 12 g5 Qe7 13 Qh3 c5 14 Qd2 a6 and White is running out of steam.

7 ... fxe5!

This is better than the immediate 7 ... Qd7. The game Stavrev-Slavov, Bulgarian Ch (Pazardzhik) 1991, saw an interesting tactical struggle after 8 f4 h5 9 f5 Qf7 10 Qf4 fxe5 11 dxe5 Qxe5 12 fxe6 Qg6 13 Qxg6 Qxg6 14 gxh5 Qe5 15 Qe2 Qf6 16 Qg2 Qc4 (40)



17 Qxd5 cxd5 18 Qxd5 Qb4+ 19 c3 Qxc3+ 20 bxc3 Qxc3+ 21 Qf1 Qe7 22 Qxc4 0-0+ (a rare instance of castling short with check!) 23 Qg2 Qac8 24 Qg5 Qxc4 25 Qac1 Qg4+ 26 Qxg4 Qb2+ 27 Qh3 Qa3+ 28 Qg2 Qxa2+ 29 Qh3 Qb3+ 30 Qg2 Qb2+ 31 Qh3 Qa3+ and ½-½. White was probably better in the complications, but nevertheless the move 8 h5 ought to be preferred as it secures an advantage without any particular risks. The game Marjanović-Skembris, Pucarevo Z 1987 continued 8 ... Qf7 9 exf6! (less convincing is 9 f4 Qb6 10 Qh3

0-0-0 11 a3 c5 12 Qa4 Qa5+ 13 c3 Qc7 14 Qxc5 Qxc5 15 dxc5 Qxc5 16 Qd4 Qb8 17 Qe3 a6 18 Qb3 Qd7 19 Qd4 Qe7 20 exf6 gxf6 21 Qa7+ Qc8 22.0-0-0 Qhg8 with an unclear position in Moutousis-Nikolaidis, Greek Ch (Athens) 1988, although White's play could be improved, e.g. 17 Qb5) 9 ... gxf6 10 f4 Qc7 11 Qg3 e5 12 Qh3 exf4 13 Qge2 Qd6 14 Qd3 Qe7 15 Qf1 and White's prospects are clearly better; Marjanović went on to win after 15 ... f5 16 gxf5 Qf6 17 Qxf4 Qxh5 18 Qg3! 0-0-0 19 Qh4 Qhf8 20 Qxd6 Qxd6 21 Qf4 Qde8 22 Qd2!.

Taking everything into account, transposing to the next chapter with 7 ... c5 may be best for Black.

8 h5 Qf7  
9 dxe5 Qe7?

This move is out of place here. Normally e7 should be reserved for the development of the king's knight, therefore 9 ... Qb4!?, played in Westeren-Groszpeter, Copenhagen 1988, seems more logical. That game continued 10 Qg2 Qe7 11 f4 Qd7 12 Qd2 Qc7 13 Qd4 Qb6 14 a3 Qa5 15 Qxe6 Qxe6 16 b4 Qd4 17 bxa5 0-0 18 Qb1 Qxf4+, but it is obvious that White's play could be improved at several points. The main strategic problem is that White's bishop bites on granite when developed on g2, therefore I suggest the alternative plan 10

f4 Qe7 11 a3 Qa5 12 b4!? Qb6 13 Qd4 Qd7 (13 ... a5 14 Qb1; 13 ... Qxd4!? is critical but very committal as Black is left with an atrocious bishop on f7) 14 Qf3! h6 15 Qd3 when the bishop eyes both flanks and is ready to assist various attacking schemes.

For 9 ... Qd7, see Game 4, Marjanović-Campora.

10 Qg2

10 f4 is impossible on account of 10 ... Qh4+, but White does not mind developing his bishop on g2 now since 9 ... Qe7? has created a lot of traffic problems in Black's camp.

10 ... Qh4?!

Sax's idea is to continue with ... Qg8-h6, ... Qb8-d7, putting pressure on both e5 and f2. However, this plan is too artificial to enjoy any chance of success.

11 Qd2!

A simple refutation. The threat of g4-g5 prevents ... Qg8-h6 and forces either 11 ... h6 or the bishop's retreat to e7. In both cases White has succeeded in rendering Black's plan impossible.

11 ... Qe7

The bishop retreats empty-handed, Black's sole gain being the strange-looking position of White's queen. After 11 ... h6 White could continue in a way similar to the game.

12 Qe3!±

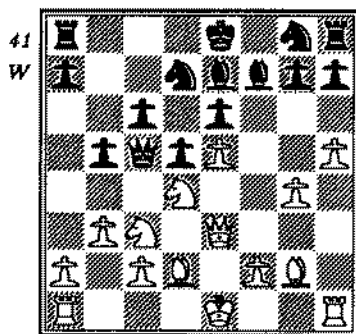
Improving the position of 10

the queen and at the same time stopping ... c6-c5 (12 ... c5? 13 Qxd5! exd5 14 e6). White already enjoys an undisputed advantage in view of his lead in development and the lack of harmony in Black's position.

12 ... Qd7  
13 b3! Qa5

White's last move revealed his intention of following up with Qc1-b2 and 0-0-0, thus discouraging Black from 13 ... Qb6 14 Qb2 c5?! which would merely weaken d5. Better, however, was 13 ... Qb6 14 Qg3 0-0-0 (14 ... d4?! 15 Qe4 Qa5+ 15 Qd2 Qxe5 16 f4 Qc7 17 Qxd4 only makes things worse), as Black would then have more fighting chances than in the actual game.

14 Qd2 Qc5  
15 Qd4 b5 (41)



16 f4

Setting in motion the pawn mass on the kingside. Unable to prevent the unpleasant threat of f4-f5, Black hurries to pin the knight on d4 in an effort to minimize its conse-

quences.

16 ... Qb6  
17 f5 Qc5  
18 Qce2 0-0-0  
19 b4 Qxd4  
20 Qxd4 Qe8  
21 0-0-0 Qh6  
22 Qc3!

Not surprisingly, White's pressure has increased at a very fast pace. 22 Qc3! creates numerous threats which can only be met by another forced move on Black's part.

22 ... Qxe5  
23 fxe6 Qxe6  
24 Qxe6 Qxe6  
25 Qxd5 Qee8?!

Slightly better was 25 ... Qe7, although White would still be winning.

26 g5 Qf5

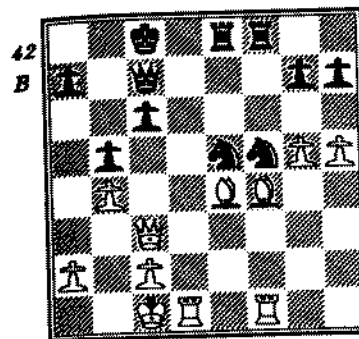
After 26 ... Qhg4 27 Qhg! the black knights would be tied up defending each other. In great time-trouble, the Hungarian Grandmaster and twice Candidate correctly tries to centralize as much as possible; however, his efforts do not have the desired effect in view of White's dominant bishops.

27 Qf4 Qc7  
28 Qe4!

Not fearing 28 ... Qd3+ 29 cxd3! with a winning position for White.

28 ... Qhf8  
29 Qhf1+- (42)

White has a dream position: both bishops point menacingly at Black's weakened queenside



and his heavy pieces are also excellently placed, applying strong pressure on the open files; in contrast, Black's queen and rooks are tied to the defence of their cavalry, passively awaiting an inevitable loss of material.

29 ... Qd6!?

Trying to complicate the issue. 29 ... g6 is not better in view of 30 Qh2! (Dorfman), and White has acquired the extra possibility of creating a dangerous passed pawn on the kingside after Qe4xf5.

30 Qd3! Qdc4

Despair, but Black had to lose something anyway.

31 Qxc4 Qxf4

32 Qxf4 Qxc4

33 Qxc4

Getting rid of the annoying knight is the safest way to victory. Black's king is sufficiently exposed to succumb to the combined attack of White's forces.

33 ... bxc4

34 Qxc4 Qb7

35 Qf1?

But this is not the way to do it: thinking that 'everything wins', White falters in his opponent's time trouble. The prophylactic 35 Qb1! was called for, with an easily won game.

35 ... Qe7?

Sax is an excellent time-trouble player, but here he failed to notice my mistake as he had no more than ten seconds left. After 35 ... Qe5! 36 Qf7+ Qe7 (the move I completely overlooked; I thought 36 ... Qb8 was forced when 37 Qf4 is an easy win for White) 37 Qxe7+ Qxe7 38 Qf4 White is better but not clearly winning in the ensuing queen ending.

36 Qf5!

White doesn't have to be asked twice. Switching the rook onto the fifth rank was rather imperative on account of the ideas mentioned in the previous note.

36 ... Qd6

37 Qb2 a6?

38 Qa5

And Black's flag fell in this position. 37 ... a6? was a dreadful time-pressure error but Black's game was already beyond repair at that point.

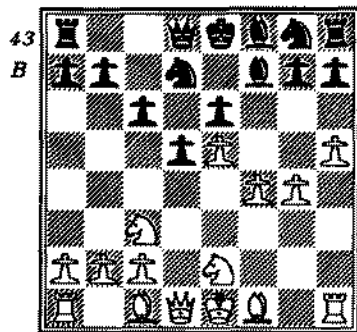
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Game 4  
Marjanović - Campora  
Nis 1985

1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 e5 Qf5 4



♠c3 e6 5 g4 Qg6 6 ♠ge2 f6  
7 h4 fxe5 8 h5 ♠f7 9 dxe5  
9 ... ♠d7  
10 f4 (43)



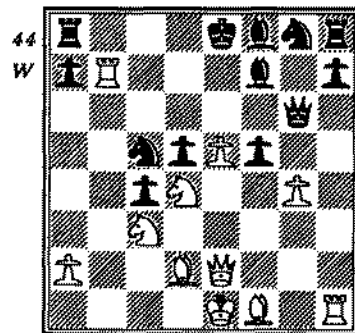
An important position for the whole variation. Black has a pawn preponderance in the centre, White on the kingside. This normally results in a lively struggle with chances for both sides.

10 ... ♗b6

Timman gives the move 10 ... ♗b6 an ! in his notes in *Informator* 43 and Seirawan agrees with him in his recent survey book on the Caro Advance. The alternatives are interesting, but probably inferior:

a) The extravagant 10 ... g5, weakening the kingside and also losing time, is thematic in terms of destroying White's central pawn chain (see van der Wiel-Timman after White's 11th move in the Main Game), but more than Black's position can handle at this moment when development is far from complete. It is mentioned here only because it led to a beautiful

game in Gazis-Makropoulos, Greek Ch (Xilokastro) 1985, where some typical dangers for Black became blatantly obvious, and also because it shows how alert White must be in order to take advantage of such mistakes in a typical sharp position arising from the main line of the Advance Variation: 11 hxg6 Qxg6 12 ♠d4 ♠f7 13 ♗d3 (preparing 0-0-0 and eyeing h7; even stronger was 13 ♠f3 threatening ♠g5, but then the following brilliancy would have never seen the light of day) 13 ... c5 14 ♠f3 c4 15 ♗e2 ♗b6 16 ♠d2 ♗xb2 (practically forced because of White's plan 0-0-0 followed by f4-f5, while 16 ... d4 17 ♠xd4 ♗xd4 18 ♠e3 loses right away) 17 ♗b1 ♗xc2 18 ♠d4 ♗g6 19 ♗xb7! ♠c5 20 f5 exf5 (44)



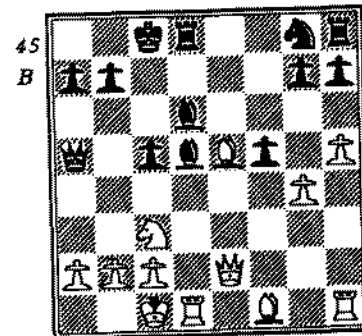
21 e6! (opening more lines and threatening both 22 ♠xd5 and 23 ♗xc4) 21 ... Qxe6 (the correct reply to 21 ... ♠xb7 is not 22 exf7+ ♗xf7 when Black begins a counter-attack with the threat ... ♗e8, but instead 22 ♠xd5!

with a powerful attack, e.g. 22 ... 0-0-0 23 ♗xc4+ ♠c5 (amusing is 23 ... ♗b8 24 ♠c6+ ♗a8 25 ♠c7\*) 24 exf7 ♗xg4 25 ♠f4! threatening both ♠h3 and ♗h3 - analysis by Gazis) 22 ♠xd5! (forcing the capture of the rook, since 22 ... 0-0-0 is followed by 23 ♗c7+ and mate in two more moves) 22 ... ♠xb7 23 ♠xe6! (as usual, it would be wrong to recover material in the midst of the attack: after 23 ♠c7+ ♗f7 24 ♠xa8 the balance will eventually tip on the wrong side) 23 ... ♠d7 (23 ... ♗f7 24 ♠g5+ ♗g7 25 ♠c3+ is killing) 24 gxf5 ♗g3+ (not 24 ... ♗xf5 25 ♠h3 ♗b1+ 26 ♗f2 ♗xh1 27 ♠xf8++ and mate soon follows) 25 ♠d1 ♠d6 26 ♗h3 (adding more fuel to the fire) 26 ... ♗e5 27 ♗xc4 ♗xf5 28 ♗e3! (limiting the black king to the d-file) ♗b1+ 29 ♗e2 ♗c8 30 ♠f8+! ♠xf8 (Black has an unpleasant choice in severe time trouble: 30 ... ♠d8 31 ♗h4+ ♠e7 32 ♗xe7 or 30 ... ♗xf8 31 ♠h3+ ♗f5 32 ♠c3 are not much better) 31 ♠h3+ ♠d6 32 ♗e6+ ♠d7 33 ♗c8+! ♗xc8 34 ♗e8\*.

b) 10 ... ♠c5 11 ♠d4 ♗b6 Black varied with 11 ... ♠h6 in the game Leuw-Groszpeter, Katerini 1992. After 12 ♠e3 ♗b6 13 ♠a4 ♗a5+ 14 c3 ♠e7 15 b4 ♗c7 16 ♠h3? g5! Groszpeter got a good position; instead of 16 ♠h3?, 16 ♠d3! was correct, when it is far from clear whether Black has achieved

anything positive with the paradoxical development of his knight on h6. The game ended: 17 0-0 ♗g8 18 f5 exf5 19 ♠xf5 ♠xf5 20 ♗xf5 ♠e6 21 ♠d4 ♠xf5 22 gxf5 g4 23 ♠g2 ♠xe5 24 ♠xe5 ♗xe5 25 ♗f1 ♗e3+ 26 ♗f2 ♗xf2+ 27 ♗xf2 ♗g5 and 0-1) 12 ♠a4 ♗a5 13 c3 ♠xd4 14 ♗xd4 c5 15 ♗d1± Van der Wiel-Messa, Graz 1981. White is ready to answer 15 ... b5? with 16 ♠xc5! ♠xc5 17 b4; if Black avoids this, he simply prepares b2-b4, freeing the ♠a4 from its entanglement.

c) 10 ... c5!? 11 f5! ♠xe5 12 ♠f4 (12 fxe6!?) 12 ... exf5 13 ♗e2 ♠d6 14 ♠fxd5 ♗a5! (The best move. After 14 ... ♠f6 15 ♠g5 White prepares castling long with a pleasant attacking position. But now Black's king will also find shelter on the queenside) 15 ♠f4 0-0-0 16 0-0-0 ♠xd5 17 ♠xe5! (45) (If 17 ♗xd5? there follows 17 ... ♠d3+! 18 cxd3 ♠xf4+ 19 ♗c2 ♠f6+)

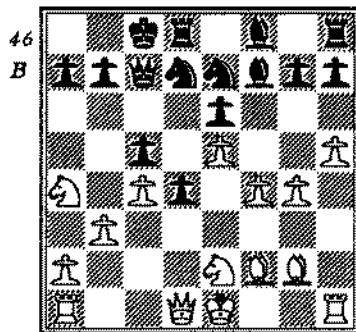


17 ... ♠xe5! (A well-considered decision. If 17 ... ♠xh1? 18 ♠xd6

Qc6 there follows 19 g5! with more than enough compensation for the exchange, e. g. 19 ... h6 20 Qe6+ Qd7 21 Qe5 hxg5 22 Qd5+-; better is 19 ... Re8 20 Qf2 Qe7 21 Qxc5 with a strong initiative for White) 18 Qxd5 Re8 19 Qc4± Kotronias-Skembris, Athens (2nd match game) 1987. After 19 ... fxg4 (19 ... Qf6 20 Rh3!; 20 Qg2±) 20 Qg2 Qe7 White should have continued with 21 c3 (21 h6!? is also interesting) 21 ... Qb8 22 Rhf1 obtaining a strong attack for the sacrificed material. It is well known that in such cases the presence of opposite-coloured bishops tends to favour the attacking side.

11 Qd4!?

White's treatment of the opening is more in accordance with the strategy of the position than 11 Qg2, played two years later in the game van der Wiel-Timman, Amsterdam 1987. That game ended 11 ... 0-0-0 12 b3 Qe7 13 Qa4 Qc7 14 Qe3 c5 15 c4 d4 (Black already has a slight advantage) 16 Qf2 (46)



16 ... g5! (now this thrust is well timed, compared with the game Gazis-Makropoulos mentioned in the note after Black's tenth move) 17 hxg6 Qxg6 18 Qg3 Qc6 19 0-0 Qe7 20 a3 Rhf8 21 Qe1 d3?! (21 ... Qdx5 22 fxe5 Qxe5?) 22 Qc3 Qd4 23 Qge4? (23 Ra2! is unclear) 23 ... Qxe4 24 Qxe4 Qxe5 25 fxe5 Rxf1+ 26 Qxf1 Qc2 27 Qg1 Qxa1 28 Qb5 Qxe5 29 Qxb7+ Qxb7 30 Qf3+ Qb6 31 Qa5+ Qxa5 32 Qb7 Qg3+ and 0-1.

11 ... 0-0-0

Instead 11 ... Qc5 transposes to line "b" in the note to Black's tenth move.

- 12 a3 c5
- 13 Qf3 Qe7
- 14 b4! cxb4
- 15 axb4 Qc6

15 ... Qxb4 16 Qd2 Qc6 (16 ... Qb6 17 Rh3 Qc6 18 Rb1 Qb4 (18 ... Qc7 19 Qb5 Qb8 20 Qbd4 or 18 ... Qb4 19 Qa2) 19 Qb5±) 17 Qg5 Qe7 (17 ... Qg8 18 Qb5 Qc5 19 Rh3) 18 Qb5 Qb8 19 Qd6 Qg8 20 Qb1 Qb6 21 Qb5 is a nightmare for Black.

16 Qa4!

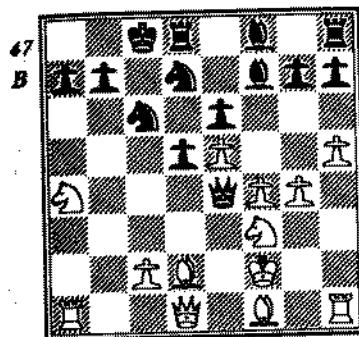
16 b5 is probably not as good. After 16 ... Qb4! 17 Qd2 Qxc3 18 bxc6 bxc6 (Marjanovic) there is no clear-cut way for White to get an advantage. The text forces Black to capture the b-pawn with his queen, giving White the necessary tempi to build up a dangerous attack.

16 ... Qxb4+

17 Qd2 Qe4+?!

More prudent was the passive 17 ... Qe7, but Campora probably disliked the position after 18 Qb5 Qdb8 19 Qb1 Qc7 20 Qe2!? when Black is kept under pressure and White's initiative fully compensates for the pawn minus.

18 Qf2 (47)



With the sacrifice of a pawn White has managed to open lines against the enemy king, thus acquiring a strong initiative. To add to Black's troubles, his queen is threatened with capture in the middle of the board and his bishop on f7 is completely out of play. Campora's next move averts immediate disaster, but at the heavy cost of a piece.

18 ... Qdx5

No relief was offered by the alternative 18 ... Qd4 19 Rh3 Qxf3 20 Rxf3 (± Marjanovic). Even worse is 18 ... Qc5?, when 19 Qb5! (threatening Rh1-e1) Qd4 20 Qg5 forces immediate capitulation.

19 fxe5 Qxe5

20 Qd3!

A strong move, designed to do away with the only piece that could become a nuisance for White, namely Black's knight.

20 ... Qxd3+?

This is equivalent to resignation. Relatively best was 20 ... Qxg4 21 Qxe5 Qd4+ 22 Qe3 Qxe5, although Black cannot really hope to survive in view of his exposed king.

21 cxd3

Now White is completely winning since all the trumps are on his side: in addition to three open files on the queen-side, he also controls the important h2-b8 diagonal leading directly to the black monarch.

- 21 ... Qxg4
- 22 Qc2+ Qb8
- 23 Rh4 Qf5
- 24 Qc5 Qxh5
- 25 Rxxh5

A problem-like mate could occur after 25 Rf4 Qh3 26 Qa6+ Qa8 27 Qc7+ Qb8 28 Rxa7! Qxa7 29 Ra4+ Qb6 30 Qe3+ d4 31 Qxd4+ Rxd4 32 Qa8+ Qb5 33 Qxd4#! (Marjanovic). However, the Yugoslav GM missed this elegant win in time trouble.

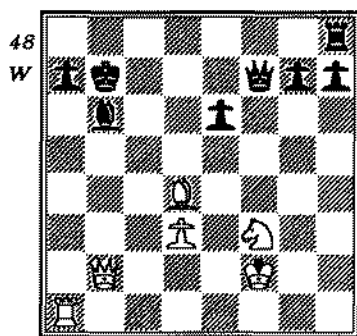
- 25 ... Qxh5
- 26 Qxb7! Qe7
- 27 Qxd8?

Time-pressure is responsible for the biggest blunders in tournament chess. This time White misses an easy mate

with 27 Qf4+ Qa8 28 Qxd8 Qxd8 29 Qc6#. Fortunately for him the position is still won.

27 ... Qxd8  
28 Qf4+ Qb7  
29 Qe3 d4  
30 Qxd4 Qb6  
31 Qb2! Qf7 (48)

There is no defence. On 31 ... Qb8 32 Qxb6 axb6 33 Qxg7+ wins.



32 Qxa7+! 1-0

Black resigned since on 32 ... Qxa7 the sequel would be 33 Qxb6+ Qa8 34 Qa6+ Qb8 35 Qe5+ with inevitable mate.

### Conclusion

Games 3 and 4 show that the variation with 6 ... f6 offers both players a lot of interesting ideas. At present White's chances seem to be slightly better, but there is still room for investigation especially in the lines 'a' and 'c' after White's 10th. Black's problem is that the knight on d7 is not very well placed and this is perhaps a good argument for choosing 6 ... c5.

Main Line: 6 ... c5 7 h4, Without 7 ... h6 (Games 5-7)

Game 5  
Nagel - Wouters  
Corr. 1988

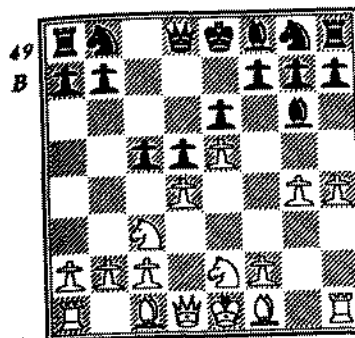
1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 e5 Qf5 4 Qc3 e6 5 g4 Qg6 6 Qge2 6 ... c5

The most thematic continuation, increasing Black's central influence while at the same time preparing to develop. The resulting positions are of a tactical nature and so a great deal of homework is required for those wishing to take up the 3 e5 variation. I hope that my coverage of this line will provide answers to all the key questions.

7 h4 (49)

The game Shabalov - Adianto, New York Open 1993 featured the move 7 Qe3!? which looks like a very playable deviation. Although Shabalov lost the game after several blunders I think that the opening was a success for him: 7 ... Qc6 8 dxc5 Qxe5 9 Qf4 a6 10 Qe2 Qf6 11 0-0-0 Qe7 12 Qg2 Qexg4 13 Qfxd5! exd5 14 Qxd5 Qxd5 15 Qxg4 0-0 16 Qxd5±. This bears a close resemblance to Game 9, with which it should be compared carefully.

At this moment Black has to make a difficult decision: the insecure position of the bishop on g6 puts an abrupt end to



any thoughts about 'normal' development and a weakening move has to be made. It is by no means clear what is the best way to solve this dilemma but one point is clear: White's threat of h4-h5 cannot be ignored without serious consequences. After 7 ... Qc6?! 8 h5 Qe4 White has two ways to prove the superiority of his position:

a) 9 Qxe4!? dxe4 10 c3 cxd4 11 Qxd4 Qc5 (11 ... Qxe5 12 Qa4+±; 11 ... Qxd4 12 cxd4 Qb4 13 Qd2± Boleslavsky) 12 Qe3 Qxd4 (12 ... Qb6!?) 13 Qa4+± Kengis-Kivlan, USSR 1979.

b) 9 Qh3! and Black's last move looks like a shot in empty space.

However, after completing this book, I had to defend my variation in the Caro Advance against a surprising novelty. In the game Kotronias-Djuric, Corfu 1993, after 7 ... Qc6 8 h5, the Yugoslav GM, noted for his uncompromising play introduced the move 8 ... Qxc2!?. Although it's hard to believe

that such a move is objectively correct, I couldn't prove a clear advantage in the post-mortem. The game went 9 Qxc2 cxd4 10 Qb1 (on 10 Qd1 White has to reckon with 10 ... Qc8 11 Qg2 Qd7) 10 ... Qc8 11 Qa4 Qb6 (11 ... Qd7 is interesting, but probably inferior) 12 Qf4 and now Djuric missed the best continuation 12 ... Qd8!. This move creates the dual threats of ... Qxe5 and ... Qb4 and after the logical 13 Qa3 Black may (only now!) trade queens with 13 ... Qb4+! 14 Qxb4 Qxb4+ when in comparison to the game he gets c4 for his knights by capturing on a3. The resulting endgame seems unclear to me, so this line holds good prospects for investigation by both sides in the near future.

Djuric's actual choice, 12 ... Qb4+?! immediately restores material equality by gaining a third pawn for his piece, but this proves inadequate as White is not saddled with any weaknesses and he may put to good use his bishop pair. The continuation was 13 Qxb4 Qxb4+ 14 Qd1 Qxe5 15 Qd3! Qxd3 16 Qxd3 Qf6 17 f3 h6?! (better 17 ... 0-0) 18 Qf4 (threatening Qe5) 18 ... Qd7 19 Qd2 Qe7 20 Qb3 e5 21 a3! Qd6 22 Qe1 (interesting is 22 Qd3 intending Qxd4) 22 ... Qd8 23 Qg3 Qc6 24 Qa5 Qc7 25 Qd2! Qe8 26 Qa1 Qf6? (26 ... Qb6? 27 Qxc7 Qxc7 28 Qb3+--; 26 ... Qc8?! 27 Qf5+--; 26 ... Qe7)

27 Qf5 Hec7?? (a terrible blunder, but his position was already lost) 28 Qxb7! 1-0.

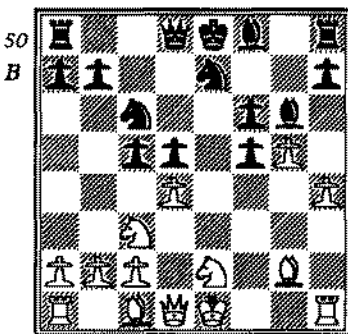
The alternatives that will be examined in the remaining games are 7 ... f6, 7 ... cxd4, 7 ... h5 and 7 ... h6.

7 ... cxd4

The old main line, which became the subject of a long theoretical debate in the '80s after Seirawan won brilliantly with it against Hort at Bad Kissingen 1981. Its main advantage is that it weakens for ever the support of White's strong e5-pawn and thus discourages f4-f5, but on the other hand it helps the white knight approach the centre with gain of time and therefore considerably improves White's chances in the complications which follow.

Another option trying to improve on the 6 ... f6 variation is 7 ... f6, planning to develop the queen's knight on c6 in order to exert more effective pressure on the centre. However, it has the corresponding disadvantage of loosening his own central structure and a likely continuation is 8 Qg2!? (now the bishop's development on g2 is more to the point - compare with Westerinen-Groszpeter in the notes to Game 3; Seirawan mentions only 8 Qf4 and Nunn's 8 h5) 8 ... Qc6 9 f4 (preparing f4-f5; White's minor pieces are ideally placed to exercise pressure on

d5 in case he successfully carries out the above-mentioned breakthrough) 9 ... Qge7 (possible is 9 ... fxe5, trying to stabilize the position in the centre, but after 10 dxe6 Qge7 11 Qb5!? White keeps the initiative; the text, on the other hand, allows an interesting pawn sacrifice resulting in a lively game) 10 f5!? exf5 11 exf6 gxf6 12 g5! (50).



White has excellent dark-square compensation for the pawn, having vacated f4 for his knight and also preparing to bring his queen's bishop efficiently into the game. Although this is hardly the final word on 7 ... f6, I think that it is quite characteristic of what White should be aiming for in such positions.

8 Qxd4 h5

9 f4!

This is a big improvement over Hort's 9 Qb5+?! in the aforementioned game. The continuation was 9 ... Qd7 10 Qg5 Qe7 11 f4 hxg4 12 Qxg4 Qxg5! 13 fxg5 Qh5 14 Qh3 Qe7

15 Qd2 Hc8 16 Hael Qb6 17 Qb3 a6 18 Qxd7+ Qxd7 19 Qc1 Hc4 20 Qd2 Hb4 21 a3?! Hxb2!! 22 Qa4 Hxc2+ 23 Qxc2 Hc8+ 24 Qc3 d4 25 Hb1 Qc6 26 Hb3 Qd5 27 Qb1 Qg4 28 Qh2 dxc3 29 Qc1 a5 30 Hf1 Qf5 31 a4 c2 32 Qa3 Qxa4 33 Hxb7+ Qc6 34 Hxf5 and White at the same time resigned.

9 ... hxg4

Wrong is 9 ... Qe7? 10 Qcb5!±. 9 ... Qd7!? was tried in the 1986 correspondence game Korolev-Kastarnov; after 10 f5 exf5 the continuation was 11 gxf5 Qxf5 12 Qxf5 Qxf5 13 Qxd5 Qc6 14 Qh3 Qxe5+ 15 Qxe5+ Qxe5 16 Qf4 Qd6 17 Hd1 Qb8 18 Qd5 (Bouwmeester suggests 18 Qc8!±, but this is not entirely clear in my opinion) 18 ... Qe7 19 0-0 Q7g6 20 Qc8 a5 21 Qe3 0-0 22 Qxb7 Ha7 23 Qxa7 Qxa7+ 24 Qh1 Hb8 25 Qa6 Hxb2 26 Qf4 Qxf4 27 Hxf4 Hxc2 28 Hf5 f6 29 Hxe5 and the game was agreed drawn. Instead, I believe, much stronger was 11 Qe2! , after which White enjoys a powerful initiative.

10 Qb5+

In many positions arising after 6 ... c5, it is important to give this check when Black is unable to interpose with ... Qb8-c6.

10 ... Qd7

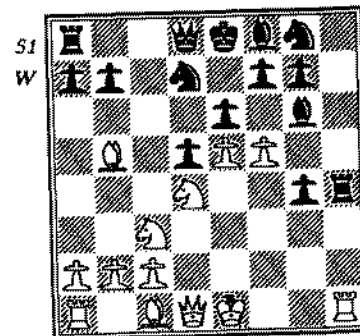
11 f5

The most energetic continuation. Another possibility is 11

Qxg4 Qh6 12 Qg2 Qb6!? 13 Qe3 0-0-0 14 h5 Qh7 15 Hh3! Qc5 16 0-0-0 with a slight advantage for White in Nagel-Gebhardt, corr. 1989.

11 ... Hxh4 (51)

Also unsuccessful was Black's choice in Sax-Vadasz, Hungary 1984, which continued 11 ... Qxf5 12 Qxf5 exf5 13 Qxd5 Qc7 (13 ... a6 14 Qg5 Qe7 15 Qxb7 axb5 16 Qxb5±; 14 ... Qe7? 15 Qc4±) 14 Qf4 Qe7 (14 ... 0-0-0 15 Qxf7) and now 15 Qd2! 0-0-0 16 e6 Qe5 17 Qd7+ Qb8 18 Qb5 Qf3+ 19 Qd1 (Sax) would have won easily.



12 Hf1!

After 12 0-0!?, 12 ... Hh1! follows, with wild complications. The text is a big improvement over 12 Hg1, which was shown to be definitely inferior in the encounter van der Wiel-Speelman, Wijk aan Zee 1983: 12 ... Qh5 13 fxe6 fxe6 14 Qxe6 Qb6 15 Qxd7+ Qxd7 16 Qxd5+ Qd6 17 Qd4 Hc8 18 e6+ Qc8 19 Qg5 Qf6 20 Qxc4+ Qc5 21 Qxc5+ Qxc5 22 Qxh4 Qxd4 23 Hg3 Hxe6+ 24 Qf1 Qe4 25 Qxe4



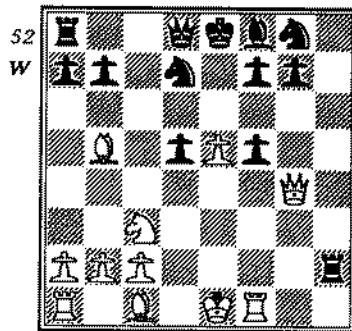
and 1/2-1/2.

Another option is 12 Qxd7+!?, attempting to force transposition to the game Moore-Mills analysed in the next note. This was White's choice in the game Krpelan-Durnik, Vienna 1991, which ended 12 ... Qxd7 13 Rf1 Rh2 (13 ... Rh5!?) 14 Qxg4 exf5? (much better is 14 ... Qh5! 15 fxe6 fxe6 and now 16 Qxe6 Qxe6 17 Rxf8 (hoping for 17 ... Qxf8 18 Qxd5+ Qe7 19 Qg5+) 17 ... Rh1+ does not work for White, but 16 Qd3 offers an initiative for the sacrificed pawn; therefore this interesting continuation requires more practical tests) 15 Qxf5 Qxf5 16 Qxf5+ Qc6 17 Qg5 Qe7 18 Qxe7 Qxe7 (for 18 ... Qxe7, see Moore-Mills immediately below) 19 0-0-0 Qh6 20 Qd3 Qc5 21 Qxd5 a5 22 Qe4 Qb5 23 Rf3 Qa6 and 1-0.

12 ... exf5?!

This is a critical moment for the whole variation. The alternative 12 ... Rh2? led to a forced loss in the game Moore-Mills, USA 1984, after 13 Qxd7+! (inferior is 13 Qxg4!?, although after 13 ... Qxf5? 14 Qxf5 exf5 (52)

the typical breakthrough 15 e6! led to a win for White in Nunn-Wells, Chichester 1984; instead, 13 ... exf5 14 Qxf5 Qxf5 15 Rxf5 Rh4+ is only ±, according to Nunn) 13 ... Qxd7 14 Qxg4 exf5 15 Qxf5 Qxf5 (also losing is 15 ... Qh5 16 Qg3 Rxc2 17 Qh3



- analysis by Moore) 16 Qxf5+ Qc6 17 Qg5 Qe7 18 Qxe7 Qxe7 19 Qf4 (another winning line provided by Moore is 19 Qxf7 Rxc2 20 Qe6+ Qc5 21 Qd1) 19 ... Rh8 (19 ... Rxc2?? 20 Qa4+) 20 Qa4+ Qc7 21 0-0-0 Qh6+ 22 Qb1 Qc6 (22 ... Qe6 23 Qb5+ Qc8 24 Qd4+- Moore) 23 Qf4 Rh6 24 e6+ Qb6 25 exf7 Qg6 26 Qb4+ Qa6 27 Qa3+ Qb6 28 Qxd5+ Qb5 29 Qd3+ Qc5 30 Qd4+ Qb5 31 Rf3 Rh4 32 Rb3+ Qa5 33 Qd2+ Qa4 34 Ra3+ Qb5 35 Ra5+ and 1-0.

Also bad is 12 ... Qxf5 13 Qxf5 Rh5 14 Qxg7+ Qxg7 15 Qxg4 Rxe5+ 16 Qd1 Qf8 17 Rg1± (Nunn).

A dynamic way to continue fighting is Seirawan's suggestion of 12 ... Rh5!?, which involves the sacrifice of a whole piece in order to wrest the initiative. The resulting positions are rich in tactical possibilities but for the time being there are no practical examples with this move. After 13 fxxg6 Black has two options:

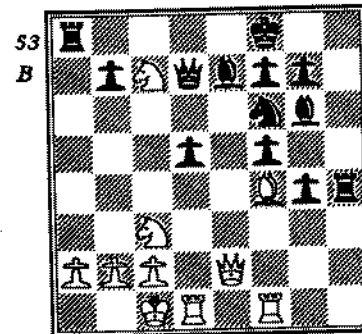
a) 13 ... Rxe5+ 14 Qce2 Qh4+

15 Qd2 Qg5+ 16 Qf4; this looks better for White, as the white king will find shelter on the queenside after c2-c3, Qd2-c2.

b) 13 ... Qh4+ (Seirawan's intention) 14 Qe2 Rxe5+ (14 ... Qh2+ 15 Qd3!? Rh3+ 16 Qe3 Qxe5 17 Qxd7+ Qxd7 18 Rxf7+ is better for White) 15 Qe3 is unclear. Black should avoid the tempting 15 ... f5? which is met strongly by 16 Qxe6!; 15 ... 0-0-0 seems reasonable, but after 16 Qxd7+ Rxd7 17 Rh1 Black has yet to prove that he has sufficient compensation.

13 e6!

An older suggestion was 13 Qf4, tested in Westerinen-Adianto, Thessaloniki OL 1988. That game continued 13 ... a6 14 e6 (14 Qa4 b5 15 Qb3 Rh3 16 Qxd5 Rh4+ 17 Qd2 0-0-0 is unclear according to Adianto) 14 ... axb5 15 Qe2 Qe7 16 exd7+? Qxd7 17 Qdx5 Qf8 18 0-0-0 Qf6 19 Qc7 (53)

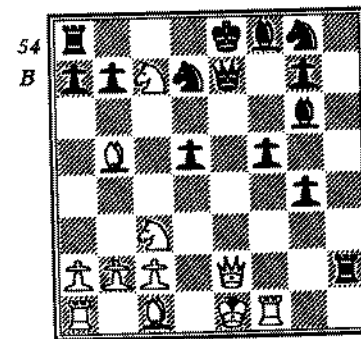


19 ... Ra5 20 Qe5 Qh5 21 Q7xd5 Qxf4 22 Qxf4 Qd6 23 Qc4 Rc5 24 Qa4 Qg5+ 25 Qb1 Rc8 26 Rfe1 g3 27 Qb5 Qc6 28 Qe2

Qg8 29 Qf3 f4 30 Re5 Qh5 31 Qe4 Qxd1 32 Rxxg5 Re8 33 Qd4 Qh6 34 Qf6+ Qh8 35 Qxe8 Qxg5 36 Qxd1 g2 37 Qe2 Rh1 38 Qg1 Qc5 and 0-1. Stronger seems Kamsky's 16 Qxd5 Qc5 17 Qc7+ Qf8 18 0-0-0 Qc8 19 exf7 Qxf7 20 Qxa8 Qxa8 21 Qxf5 Qe6 22 Qg3! Rh3 23 Qxe7 Qxe7 24 Qd6+ Qe8 25 Qb5+-, but this has not yet been adopted in practice.

13 ... fxe6  
14 Qxe6 Qe7  
15 Qe2 Rh2!  
16 Qc7+ (54)

Inferior is 16 Qe5, played in the earlier game Kotliar-Retter, Israel 1986, which concluded 16 ... Qf6 17 Qf4 Rxc2 18 Qc7+ Qf7 19 Qxe7+ Qxe7 20 Qxa8 Rxb2 21 Qxd7 Qb4 22 Qd2 Qxd7 23 0-0-0 Qa3 24 Qb1 Qc5 25 Qe3 Qe2+ 26 Qxa3 Rxe3 27 Qxd5 Rxa3 28 Rxc5 Rxa2 29 Rxc7+ Qf6 30 Rxb7 Ra1+ 31 Rb1 Rxb1+ 32 Qxb1 f4+ 33 Qc1 f3 34 Qd2 Qe4 35 Qc7 g3 36 Qe3 Qe5 37 Rxf3 Qxf3 38 Qxf3 a5 39 Qb5 and 1/2-1/2.



16 ... Qd8?!

A better defensive try is 16 ... Qf7!, as Black's king is a lot safer and may assist his army of pawns. I suspect this is also not enough in the long run, but it obviously demands a lot more precision on White's part to prove it.

- 17 Qxe7+ Qxe7
- 18 Qf4 Rxc2
- 19 Qxa8 Qh4+

The continuation 19 ... Qc5 20 Qxd5 a6? 21 Qc7+ Qc8 22 Q(any)b6\* demonstrates the dangers faced by Black's king even after the exchange of queens. Also useless is 19 ... Qgf6 20 Rf2 etc.

- 20 Qd1 Rxb2
- 21 Qc7 Qf7
- 22 Qc1 Rf2

Black is forced to exchange his only rook, since 22 ... Rb4 23 Qd6 loses immediately.

- 23 Rxf2 Qxf2
- 24 Q7xd5 g3
- 25 Qc2

Black has kept four pawns for the rook, but his pieces are uncoordinated and the end is near. Still, White must not relax as the passed pawns may become dangerous at a moment's notice.

- 25 ... Qc5

25 ... g2 is premature: 26 Qh2 g5 27 Qg1 and White is winning easily after both 27 ... Qh4 28 Qe3 and 27 ... Qg3 28 Rd1!

- 26 Rd1 Qc8
- 27 Qe2 Qh5

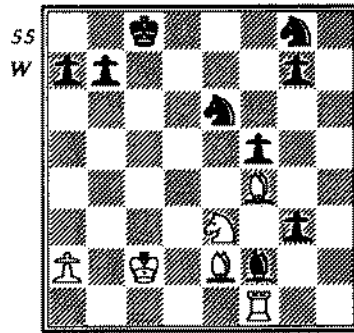
Thematic is 27 ... Qe4 28

Qb6+! axb6 29 Qd7+ Qd8 30 Qxf5+ etc.

- 28 Qe3 Qf3

Also losing are 28 ... a6 29 Rd5 Qxe3 30 Qxe3 Qe4 31 Qb6, 28 ... Qf6 29 Qxf5 and 28 ... Qe7 29 Rh1.

- 29 Rf1 Qxe2
- 30 Qxe2 Qe6 (55)



31 Qxg3! 1-0

The final stroke. Black resigned, since both 31 ... Qxg3 32 Qxf5 Qe5 33 Qc4 and 31 ... Qxe3 32 Qc4 Qd7 33 Qxe6+ Qxe6 34 Rf1 are quite hopeless.

**Conclusion**

The variation with 7 ... cxd4 is perhaps the most complex sub-variation of the Caro Advance. At present White's chances seem better, but Seirawan's suggestion of 12 ... Rh5! might cause a renewal of interest in this discarded line.

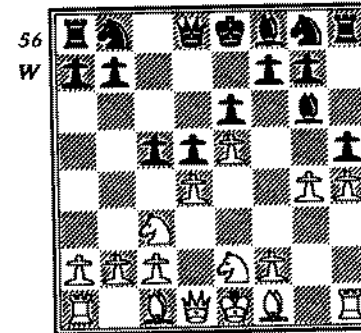
**Game 6**

**Van der Wiel - Icklicki**  
Brussels 1985

1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 e5 Qf5 4

Qc3 e6 5 g4 Qg6 6 Qge2 c5 7 h4

7 ... h5! (56)



This idea has been considered inadequate because of the game under examination, but my analysis indicates that if White relies on the game result without further analysis he may be confronted with a nasty experience. For example, in his recent book on the Caro Advance Seirawan adopts established theory, reaching rather different conclusions from those which I suggest in the following analysis.

8 Qf4 Qh7!

Strategically sounder than Seirawan's 8 ... Qc6!? which results in a deterioration of Black's pawn structure on the kingside and is examined extensively in Game 7.

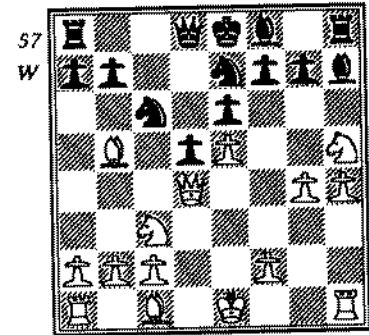
9 Qxh5

The Danish IM Klaus Berg has suggested here 9 g5!; however this has never been tried in tournament practice.

9 ... cxd4  
10 Qxd4 Qc6

11 Qb5 Qe7! (57)

An improvement on Bole-slavsky's recommendation of 11 ... Qxc2?!, when 12 Qg5 Qd7 13 Qd2 Qh7 14 Rcl+ would follow. Black is in no hurry to restore material equality but opts instead for a flexible development of his pieces.



12 Qh6!

The only way to maintain the initiative. White develops with a gain of tempo, perceiving that the bishop on h6 will be immune from capture for several moves. White would have had big headaches after 12 Qg5?! a6 13 Qxc6+ Qxc6 in view of Black's razor-like bishops.

12 ... Qd7

According to my research, Black has a stronger move at this juncture:

12 ... a6!

This is a big improvement, since 13 Qxc6+ Qxc6 14 Qf4 Rg8! is only a slightly worse version of Black's position in the previous note. White has to be accurate now, therefore I present my analysis in some

detail:

13 Qxc6+ Qxc6 14 Qf4 Qg8!

A novelty by the author. Inadequate is 14 ... gxh6?! (van der Wiel disposes of the alternative 14 ... Qb6 by 15 Qxg7 Qxb2 16 0-0±) 15 Qf6+ Qe7 16 Qfxd5+! exd5 17 0-0-0! (worse is van der Wiel's 17 Qf6+ as after 17 ... Qe8 18 Qxh8 (+- van der Wiel) 18 ... Qxc2 the position is rather unclear) and Black has an unpleasant choice between:

1) 17 ... Qg7 18 Qxd5 Qf8 19 e6±;

2) 17 ... Qe6 18 Qxd5±;

3) 17 ... d4 18 Qf6+ Qe8 19 Qxh8 Qg6 (19 ... Qxc2 20 Qxc2 Qa5 (20 ... Qc7 21 e6!) 21 Qe4 Qb4+ 22 Qd2!± or 19 ... Qa5 20 Qxh7 dxc3 21 e6!+-) 20 e6! fxe6 (20 ... Qa5 21 e7!) 21 Qh1 Qf7 (21 ... Qxh4 22 Qxe6+ Qf7 23 Qxg6! or 21 ... Qf7 22 h5 Qg5+ 23 f4! are both depressing for Black) 22 Qe4 Qa5 23 Qd6+ Qe7 24 Qf5+ Qe8 25 a3 with a strong initiative for White.

15 0-0-0 Qa5! 16 Qh3!

As in many lines so far, the rook transfer to the third rank combines defensive and attacking purposes. Here it is the only move, resulting in a highly complex position awaiting its first practical test. If 16 ... d4 17 Qxd4! Qxd4 18 Qxd4±; or 16 ... Qb4 17 Qd4! Qc8 (17 ... Qxa2? 18 Qxa2 Qxa2 19 Qa4+-; 17 ... Qxc2 18 Qa4 Qc7 (18 ... Qc5 19 Qf3 Qg6 20 Qxg7 Qxg7 21 Qxg7+

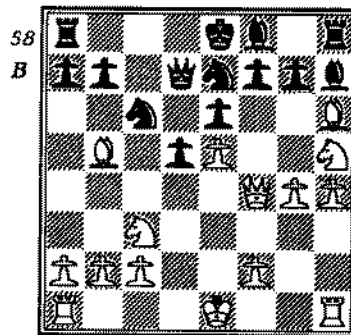
Qxg7 22 h5 Qh7 23 h6) 19 Qxg7! Qxg7 20 Qb5 with a strong initiative; 17 ... Qc6 18 Qd2!?) 18 Qxb4! Qxb4 (18 ... Qxb4 19 Qxg7) 19 Qxb4 Qxb4 20 Qxg7 and the white h-pawn will be valuable in the ending considering that Black cannot effectively use his pressure on the c-file, e.g. 20 ... d4 (20 ... f5!? might be the only chance to complicate the issue) 21 Qf6+ Qd8 22 Qxg8 dxc3 23 Qf6 cxb2+ 24 Qxb2; or 20 ... Qe7 21 Qf6+ Qf8 22 Qg5 and if 22 ... d4 23 Qf6. However:

16 ... Qc8! 17 Qf3 Qg6

leaves the position unclear and further tests are needed before a comprehensive evaluation is passed.

Nevertheless, Icklicki's move (if followed up correctly) also contains some drops of poison.

13 Qf4 (58)



13 ... 0-0-0?

A decisive mistake. There was still time to mix things up by 13 ... Qg6! 14 Qa4! 0-0-0 with a difficult game for both sides. Inferior in this line would

be 14 Qg3?!, as after 14 ... 0-0-0 15 Qxg7 (15 Qg5?! Qxe5! 16 Qxd8 Qxd8 is better for Black) 15 ... Qxg7 16 Qxg7 Qxe5 Black gets excellent counterplay in the centre in return for the sacrificed pawn.

14 Qxg7 Qxg7

15 Qxg7 Qg6

16 Qxc6!

Now it is clear why Black should have played ... Qe7-g6 earlier. Since there is no piece hanging on h6, White hastens to exchange one of the dangerous knights and occupy d4 with his queen.

16 ... Qxc6?!

More practical chances were offered by 16 ... Qxf4 17 Qxd7+ Qxd7! (on 17 ... Qxd7 there follows 18 Qe2! Qe4 19 f3! Qxf3 20 Qf1!±) as White has to play very accurately to capitalize on his advantage:

a) 18 Qe2?! Qe4! 19 Qxf4?! Qxd1 20 h5 Qc7! and White is in difficulties;

b) 18 Qh5! Qxh5 19 gxh5 Qc7!? (19 ... Qe4! is tougher, when White still has some technical difficulties to overcome):

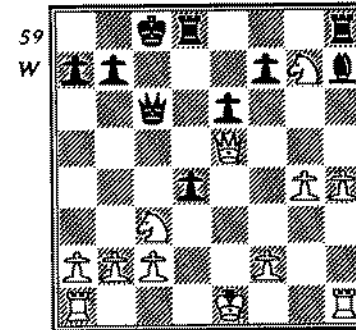
b1) 20 0-0-0?! Qc4 with strong counterplay for Black;

b2) 20 Qc1!: 20 ... Qc4 21 Qb5! Qe4+ 22 Qd2 Qxe5? 23 Qd6+ Qd7 24 Qxf7+-; 20 ... a6 21 Qe2! Qe4 22 Qh2 Qxh5 23 Qg3!± since 23 ... Qxe5? fails to 24 f4!, trapping the rook in broad daylight.

17 Qd4 Qxe5

Black is two pawns down without any compensation. With his last move he hopes for a tactical *mêlée*, but White finds a neat way to finish him off.

18 Qxe5 d4 (59)



19 Qh3!

The game is over. In addition to his extra piece, White soon gets a mating attack.

19 ... Qg2

20 0-0-0 Qxf2

21 Qc5+ Qb8

22 Qb5 Qd5

23 Qxa7+ Qc8

24 Qa8+ 1-0

Game 7

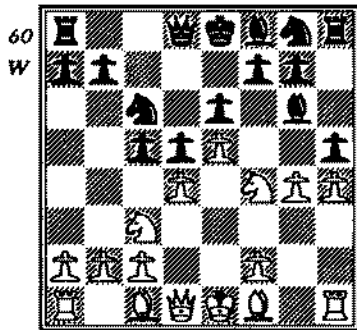
Timman - Seirawan  
Hilversum (4th Match  
Game) 1990

1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 e5 Qf5  
4 Qc3 e6 5 g4 Qg6 6 Qge2  
c5 7 h4 h5!?

8 Qf4

8 ... Qc6!? (60)

In matches of this calibre novelties like 8 ... Qc6 are a bit



unusual; Black not only surrenders a powerful bishop, but also allows the crippling of his pawn structure for the sake of quick development and central pressure. Yet, although such moves are hardly aesthetically pleasing, this one is by no means easy to refute.

9 Qxg6

White must take his chance while it is there, destroying the defensive pawn skeleton around Black's king. The game Tzoumbas-Kourkounakis, Athens 1992, saw the routine development 9 Qb5 which resulted in a catastrophe for White: 9 ... Qe7 (a move that would normally be met by Qb5; it now secures complete control of f5 without any structural concessions while at the same time the destruction of White's pawn centre is assured) 10 Qe3 hxg4 11 dxc5 Qf5 and Black already had a strategically winning position due to the pressure on the weak white pawns and the tactical possibility ... g7-g5.

9 ... fxg6

10 Qd3?

A grave error which is already an indication that White has been taken by surprise. A logical explanation could be that Timman wanted to punish his opponent for the 'ugly' 8 ... Qc6 as quickly as possible, but now the position is already lost!

White's best is Seirawan's suggestion to redeploy the remaining knight by 10 Qe2!, threatening both to increase the pressure on the weakened black kingside pawns and to stabilize White's central pawn chain with c2-c3. Black has nothing better than 10 ... cxd4 (10 ... hxg4?! 11 Qf4 Qxd4 12 Qg4 Qxh4? 13 Qb5+!+- or 12 ... g5 13 Qg6 (according to analysis by Greek masters, 13 Qxe6 fails because of 13 ... Qc8 - but not 13 ... Qd7 because then follows 14 Qxd4 cd4 15 Qb5 with much the better ending for White) 13 ... Qh6 14 Qh5 Qa5+ 15 Qd2 Qa4 16 Qxh8+±) 11 Qxd4 Qxd4 12 Qxd4 Qe7, reaching a position which the American Grandmaster considers satisfactory for Black. I disagree with this evaluation since after 13 Qd3 Qc6 14 Qa4! (worse would be 14 Qxg6+? Qd7 15 Qa4 hxg4! which merely drives the black king to a safer spot, while also interesting in this line is 15 ... Qb6!? 16 gxh5 Qc5 17 Qf1 Qaf8 as in Forster-Lyrberg, Guaruava 1991, which concluded 18

f4 Qe7 19 Qe2 Qc7 20 c3 Qxe5 21 fxe5 Qxf1 22 Qxf1 Qf8+ 23 Qe2 Qf2+ 24 Qd1 Qg2 25 Qd2 Qf1+ 26 Qc2 Qxa1 27 Qe8 Qc5 28 Qf7+ Qb6 29 Qxe6+ Qc7 30 Qf7+ Qb6 31 Qe6+ and ½-½) 14 ... hxg4 15 Qd2! (White must avoid the queen exchange at all costs as after 15 Qe3? Qa5+! Black would have everything going his way) 15 ... Qxh4 16 0-0-0 Qxh1 (16 ... Qd7!? - Kourkounakis) 17 Qxh1 Qb6 18 Qxg4!. Black dare not play 18 ... Qxe5? in view of 19 Qb5+!. Therefore 18 ... Qd7 is forced, leaving White with much the better game after 19 f4.

*Editor's note:* the latest word on 10 Qe2 comes from the game Timman-Karpov, Jakarta Wch (17) 1993. There Karpov replied 10 ... Qge7!? which led to great complications: 11 Qf4 cxd4 12 Qh3 (12 Qxe6 Qd7 13 Qxf8 Qxf8 eases Black's task) 12 ... Qxe5 13 Qe2 (13 Qxe6 is met by 13 ... Qa5+ 14 Qd2 Qb6, and 13 gxh5 by 13 ... Qf5) 13 ... Q7c6 (13 ... hxg4 14 Qxe5 gxh3 15 Qxe6 Qc6 16 Qe2!) 14 Qxe6 Qa5+ 15 Qf1 hxg4 16 Qxg4 Qd6 17 Qg2 Qa6 18 Qd1 Qxg4 19 Qxg4 Qe5 20 Qxd4 Qc4 21 Qxc4 dxc4 22 Qe3 (Adianto pointed out that 22 Qf4! Qd7 23 Qe5 (and not 23 Qxg7 Qf7!) 23 ... Qae8 24 Qad1 Qc6 25 Qhe1 Qhf8 26 Qd4! followed by Qde4 is probably winning for White) 22 ... Qd7 23 Qe5 Qe7? (23 ... Qc6) 24 Qad1+ Qc6. Here

the commentators, including Seirawan who was acting as Timman's second, felt that 25 Qd4 should give White good chances, e.g. 25 ... b5 26 Qhd1 Qad8 27 Qe6 or 25 ... Qf6 26 Qel!. Instead a draw was agreed in the game following the moves 25 Qe6 Qf6 26 Qd4+ Qb6 27 Qf3+ Qc6 28 Qd4+ Qb6 29 Qhe1 Qae8 30 Qe6+ Qc6 31 Qd4+ Qb6 32 Qg5 Qf7 33 Qe3 Qa6 ½-½.

10 ... cxd4!

11 Qb5

Bad is 11 Qxg6+? as the queen gets trapped after 11 ... Qd7 12 Qb5 Qxe5. Note that Black would react in a similar way to 10 Qd3.

11 ... hxg4!

A typical reaction, both in order to open the h-file and challenge control of the important outpost f5.

12 Qxg6+ Qd7

13 Qxg4 Qb6!

White has re-established material equality, but his position looks completely disorganized due to lack of central control. With his next move Timman tries to restore the coordination of his pieces by bringing the knight back into play, even at the cost of a pawn.

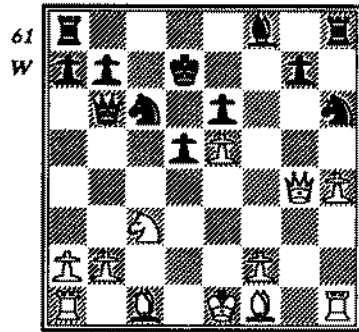
14 c3! dxc3

15 Qxc3 Qh6! (61)

Also good is 15 ... Qd4! (Timman). The text move, although objectively correct,



allows White to stir up some colourful complications.



16 Qxh6 Qxb2  
17 Qd2!

Sacrificing the exchange to prevent Black from consolidating his advantage. In this way, White keeps some swindling chances alive.

17 ... Qxa1+  
18 Qe2 Qb2?

Not only missing a picturesque win but also letting White back into the game. Seirawan himself points out the following winning line in *Inside Chess*: 18 ... d4! 19 Qg2 d3+! 20 Qe3 Qc5+ 21 Qe4 Qb2 22 Qxg7+ Qe7! 23 Qb1 (23 Qxd3 Qad8-+) 23 ... Qxd2 24 Qxb7+ Qc6 25 Qxe7 (unfortunately for White he cannot discover an attack on the black king since all king moves - except 25 Qf3 - are illegal) 25 ... Qxh4+ 26 Qf3 Qxf2+.

19 Qh3

Of course, White cannot play 19 Qxd5 Qb5+.

19 ... Qe8  
20 Qb1 Qc2

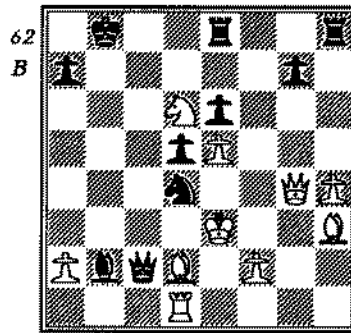
21 Qxb7+ Qc8  
22 Qb1?

White returns the compliment. After 22 Qb5 g5! 23 h5 Qh7 24 Qxd5 Qc7 the position is still unclear, according to Seirawan.

22 ... Qa3!-+

The game is decided. White probably overlooked that on 23 Qxg7 Black answers 23 ... Qh7!, repulsing all threats before continuing with his own attack.

23 Qd1 Qb2  
24 Qb5 Qb8  
25 Qd6 Qd4+  
26 Qe3 (62)



26 ... Qxh4!  
27 Qxh4 Qxd1  
28 Qg4 Qc2+  
29 Qd3 Qe1+  
0-1

White loses his queen after 30 Qe3 Qg2+ 31 Qd3 Qb1+.

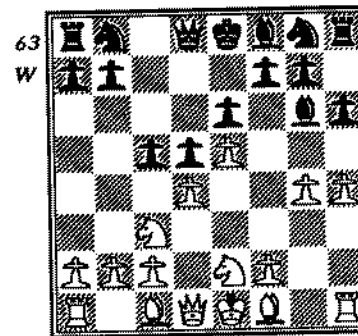
This game, in conjunction with its partner from the same match (Game 10), demonstrates how difficult it is to handle an innovation in this variation even at the highest level.

Main Line:  
6 ... c5 7 h4 h6 (Games 8-11)

Game 8  
Kotronias - Campora  
Moscow 1989

1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 e5 Qf5 4 Qc3 e6 5 g4 Qg6 6 Qge2 c5 7 h4

7 ... h6 (63)



A modest choice, which has become more and more popular recently. We have already witnessed that the alternative choices are also interesting, yet the general impression remains that it is difficult to neutralize White's initiative within the limits of the existing theoretical knowledge. Therefore, to give preference to 7 ... h6!? is not a matter of taste, but rather a well-grounded decision to opt for a sound middlegame.

8 h5?!

White should refrain from an early h4-h5, as it deprives him of a later tempo-gain on Black's bishop when the f-pawn is advanced. The shortcomings

of 8 h5?! will become apparent in the following notes as well as in Nunn-Seirawan, Lugano 1983, featured in Game 10, Timman-Seirawan.

Another option is 8 Qf4 Qh7 9 Qe3 Qc6 (Black obtained an equal game after 9 ... Qe7 10 dxc5 Qec6 11 Qb5 Qd7 12 Qe2 Qc7 13.0-0 Qxe5 14 Qad1 Qxc5 15 Qfxd5 in Korchnoi-Byvshev, USSR 1951) 10 Qh3 Qb6 11 Qa4 Qa5+ with great complications, Papatheodorou - Kourkounakis, Athens 1992, but best is 8 Qe3!, as will be seen in the three remaining games of this chapter.

8 ... Qh7  
9 Qe3 Qb6

Also good is 9 ... Qc6, which is likely to transpose after 10 Qd2 and retains independent significance only after the try 10 dxc5, which proved unsuccessful in Yudasin-Seirawan, Jacksonville 1990: 10 ... Qxe5 11 Qd4 Qf6 12 Qb5+ Qfd7 13 f4 a6! (Black has satisfactory development, therefore any tactical skirmishes taking place on his side of the board are likely to end in his favour) 14 fxe5 (14 Qa4 Qc4) 14 ... axb5 15 Qdx5 Qxc5 16 Qd4 Qe4 17 Qb6 Qxb6 18 Qxb6 Qd7 19 0-0 f6 20 Qd4 Qe7 21 Qae1 Qhf8 22 Qxe4 Qxe4 23 a3 Qxc2 24 Qc1 Qac8 25 exf6 gxf6 26 Qf2 Qd3 27 Qc3 Qc4 and 0-1.

10 Qd2 c4

After 10 ... Qxb2? 11 Qb1

12 ♖xc2 ♗xc2 ♕xc2 13 ♖xb7 c4 14 ♖b5 ♖a6 15 ♕g2 White has more than enough compensation for the pawn, according to analysis by Karpov and Zaitsev.

- 11 0-0-0 ♖c6  
12 f4 0-0-0

12 ... ♗a5 transposes to Nunn-Seirawan (see the note to White's 9th move in Game 10).

- 13 ♕h3!?

White's plan is to destroy Black's defensive formation by advancing the g-pawn all the way up to g6.

- 13 ... ♖b8?

This loss of tempo allows White's inaccuracy on the 8th move to go unpunished. Correct is either 13 ... ♗a6! or 13 ... ♕ge7! with a slight advantage for Black.

- 14 f5 ♖b4?

The decisive mistake from a strategic point of view. When I saw this move on the board I was very relieved, since it self-blocks Black's attack (for the correct approach see Game 10, Timman - Seirawan). Much better was 14 ... ♗a6, still with an unclear position.

- 15 a3 ♕a5  
16 ♖f4 ♖e8  
17 ♖hf1

Now White's advantage is evident: more space, better development and the lack of an active plan for his opponent guarantee a long-term superiority. The only problem is how to increase the pressure in the

most effective way, but since White can afford to take his time he will first attempt to exchange the black-squared bishops and thus create more weaknesses in the black camp.

- 17 ... ♕d8

The fact that Black is forced to play such moves just to complete his development speaks volumes about his predicament.

- 18 ♗e1 ♕e7  
19 ♕d2 ♗c6  
20 ♖ce2 ♕xd2+  
21 ♗xd2

The first exchange of wood does nothing to relieve Black from his congestion. Meanwhile, the white pawn on f5 may never be taken because of the weakness of its counterpart on d5.

- 21 ... ♕c8  
22 ♗b4!

White's intention is to exchange queens, a highly favourable event because it will allow him to open another front on the queenside. Black's lack of space will then make it difficult for him to block all entrances to his side of the board.

- 22 ... b6  
23 ♖c3

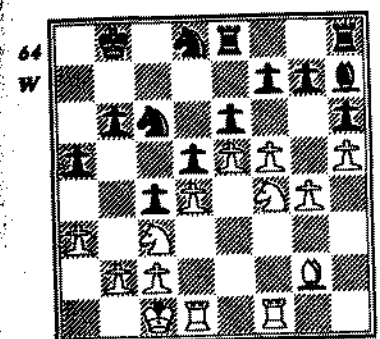
Now the idea is to bring additional pressure on the d5-pawn by ♕h3-g2.

- 23 ... a6?!

Better was 23 ... a5 immediately, but it could not have saved Black's head in the long

run.  
24 ♕g2 a5  
Now the only move to keep his head above the water, because of the threat 25 ♖fxd5 exd5 26 ♕xd5 and in addition to the three pawns for the piece White will obtain a strong attack.

- 25 ♗b5 ♕e7  
26 ♗xc6 ♖exc6 (64)



Now White may proceed slowly with preparation of the breakthrough b3 and attempt to infiltrate through the c- and f-files, as well as the knight jump to d6 via b5. However, the plan chosen in the game is far more typical of such positions, emphasizing the long-term space superiority provided by the central white pawns in the Caro Advance.

- 27 ♖fxd5! exd5  
28 ♕xd5 ♖hf8  
29 ♕xc4

White has not sacrificed anything from the material point of view, while the h7-bishop is destined to remain a spectator (or worse) in the

coming stages of the battle. In addition, the black knights have no supported strongpoints from which to exercise their power while the black rooks lack open files. Meanwhile, White's central pawn roller will advance without facing serious resistance.

- 29 ... ♕a7  
30 ♖fe1! ♖dc6  
31 ♖b5!

Exchanges will emphasize White's advantage and free the way for the pawns. Black is so cramped that he does not have any real choice.

- 31 ... ♖xb5  
32 ♕xb5 ♖b7  
33 ♖e3! ♖d8  
34 d5 ♕a7  
35 ♕e2 ♖fe8  
36 d6 ♕g8  
37 b4!

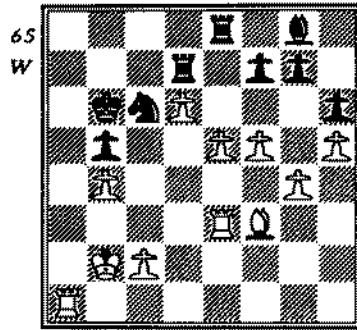
Now focusing on the weak position of the black king, White opens more lines.

- 37 ... axb4  
38 axb4 b5  
39 ♖b2 ♖b6  
40 ♖f3 ♖d7  
41 ♖a1

Setting a trap into which Black walks unsuspectingly. However, his position was already hopeless in view of the threat 42 ♖ea3.

- 41 ... ♖c6? (65)  
42 ♖a6+! ♖xa6  
43 ♖xc6 ♖ed8

Also useless was 43 ... ♖dd8 44 ♕xe8 ♖xe8 45 d7 ♖d8 46 e6



etc.

44 Na3+ 1-0

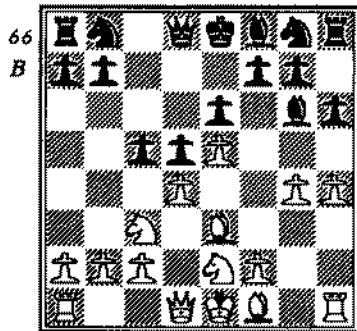
The move order is important, since the black king may not go to b7 and after 44 ... Bb6 45 Qxd7 Bxd7 46 Na8 Qh7 47 Bh8 the poor bishop is trapped inside the cage created by the white pawns.

Game 9

Timman - Karpov  
Belfort 1988

1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 e5 Qf5 4 e3 e6 5 g4 Qg6 6 e2 c5 7 h4 h6

8 Qe3! (66)



There are two main alternatives for Black: 8 ... Bb6! (Game

10) and 8 ... cxd4 (Game 11). As we shall see, the most accurate move is 8 ... Bb6!, overprotecting Black's c-pawn and preparing queenside castling. Karpov's choice 8 ... e2 looks like a solid developing move, but Timman's treatment of the opening reveals its dark side.

8 ... e2?!  
9 dxc5!

This move was first introduced in this game. White gives up the centre for tactical reasons, estimating that his lead in development will be of considerable help in the complications that will follow. In the rapid chess game Palamidis-Kourkounakis, Athens 1991, White committed the typical mistake of advancing immediately 9 h5 and the loss of time showed after 9 ... Qh7 10 f4 Ba5 11 Bxd2 Bc8 12 f5 exf5 13 e2xd5 Bxd2+ 14 Bxd2 f4 15 Qg2 e7 16 Bhf1 e5 17 c3 e4 18 Qh1 e3+ 19 Qxf3 gxf3 20 e3 cxd4 21 Qxd4 Bd8 22 e7+ Qd7 23 e5 a6 24 e6 Qxd6 25 exd6 Qxd4 26 cxd4 Bc8 27 Bxf3 Bc2+ and Black won easily.

9 ... e2  
10 e3! a6?!

On 10 ... Qh7, best is 11 Qb5+ e6 12 Be2 with an initiative due to the enormous pressure White acquires on all open lines (ideas based on e2xd5 are especially appealing). However, this line represented the lesser evil for Black. The

dangers inherent in Black's position were shown in Kotronias-Theoharis, Athens (simul) 1992: after 11 Be2!? (slightly worse than 11 Qb5+) 11 ... e7 12 0-0-0 Ba5 13 Bd4!? e4?! 14 Bxc4 dxc4 15 Bxc4 0-0-0 16 Qg2 e6 White had a winning continuation in 17 e6! (Kourkounakis) 17 ... fxe6 18 Bxe6+, e.g. 18 ... Bb8 19 Qf4+ Ba8 20 Bxc6!! or 18 ... Bd7 19 Bd1 Bd8 20 Qxc6 bxc6 21 Bxc6+ Bc7 22 Ba8+ etc. This variation is not forced, of course, but the general impression is that White should be able to obtain an advantage no matter how Black plays.

Another possibility is 10 ... d4, but according to Timman it will prove insufficient after 11 Qb5+ e7 12 e2xg6+ (12 e2fd5+!? exd5 13 Qxd4 is also interesting) 12 ... f4 13 Qf4 dxc3 14 Qxe5±. The fact that Karpov judges it necessary to resort to a move like 10 ... a6 when behind in development speaks volumes about the state of Black's game at this point.

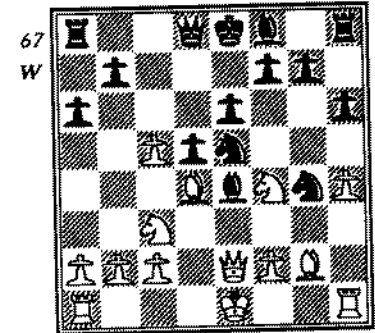
11 Qg2 e6  
12 Be2!

A typical reaction, preparing queenside castling while adding pressure on the e-file. It is quite uncharacteristic of Karpov to get in such a horrible mess after only a dozen moves in the opening, therefore this example serves to emphasize the virulence of the Advance Variation

even against the very best opposition.

Note the similarity of this position to Shabalov - Adianto in the note to White's 7th move in Game 5, where White forewent the h-pawn advance.

12 ... e2fxg4  
13 Qd4+ Qe4 (67)



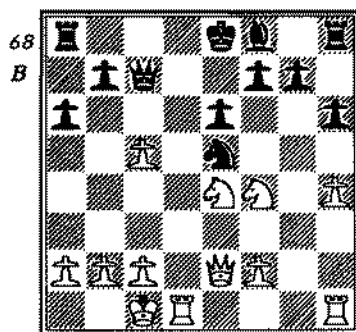
Black is already in a very unpleasant situation. After the simple 14 e2xe4 dxe4 15 Bxe4 the ex-World Champion would have found it hard to put up a respectable defence. Consider the following variations (analysis by Timman):

- a) 15 ... f5 16 Bxb7 Bxd4 17 Qc6+-;
- b) 15 ... e2c6 16 0-0-0 e6 17 Qxf6 Bxf6 18 Bxc6+!+-;
- c) 15 ... Ba5+ 16 b4! Bxb4+ 17 c3 Bc4 18 Bxb7 Bd8 19 Qf1! Ba4 20 Qxa6+-.

The move Timman chose, on the other hand, allows Karpov to display the iron determination for which he is famous, by performing yet another defensive miracle.

14 Qxe4?! dxe4

- 15 0-0-0 ♖c7
- 16 Qxe5 ♗xe5
- 17 ♗xe4 (68)



Despite his error on the 14th move, White still keeps a tremendous pull mainly due to his beautifully centralized knights. Black cannot grab a pawn by 17 ... Qxc5? as he would be swiftly punished by 18 ♗xc5 ♖xc5 19 ♖he1 ♖c8 20 c3 ♗(any) 21 ♗xe6! (Timman). In this precarious situation, the ex-World Champion sticks to the only correct idea, trying to relieve his position by exchanges.

- 17 ... ♖d8
- 18 ♗h5!

Tying the black bishop to the defence of the sensitive point g7 while preparing f2-f4-f5. Wrong would have been 18 ♖xd8? ♗xd8! when the black king escapes to the queenside.

- 18 ... ♗c6
- 19 f4?

A hasty decision which throws away White's advantage. Before going on with his

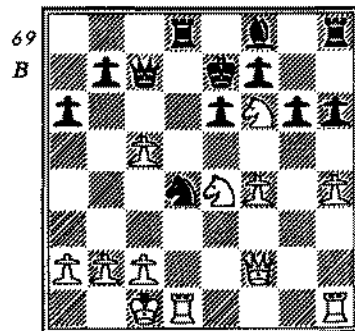
plan, White should "squench" any counterplay Black might have and the most appropriate way to do so is by playing 19 c3!. Black then has a sad choice between:

- a) 19 ... g6 20 ♗ef6+! ♗e7 21 ♖d6! ♖xd6 (21 ... gxh5? 22 ♗d5+-) 22 cxd6+ ♖xd6 23 ♖d1+;
- b) 19 ... ♖e5? (with the idea ... f7-f5) 20 f4 ♖f5 21 ♗d6+! ♖xd6 22 cxd6 g6 23 ♖d5!!+-;
- c) 19 ... Qe7 20 ♗xg7+ ♗f8 21 ♗h5 and Black is a pawn down without any compensation.

- 19 ... ♗d4!

Karpov seizes the opportunity to centralize his knight and evict the white queen from her fine post on e2. Most importantly, he has won the psychological battle since Timman has failed to make the most out of his highly advantageous position.

- 20 ♖g2 g6
- 21 ♗hf6+ ♗e7
- 22 ♖f2?! (69)



According to Timman, White

could still maintain some pressure by 22 ♗d6!?. The text move results in wholesale exchanges after the pseudo-combination which follows.

- 22 ... ♖xf4+!
- 23 ♖xf4 ♗e2+
- 24 ♗b1 ♗xf4
- 25 ♖xd8 ♗xd8
- 26 ♖d1+ ♗c7
- 27 b4 ♗d5
- 28 ♗xd5+ exd5
- 29 ♗f6 ♗c6
- 30 ♗xd5 g5

Black has managed to neutralize White's aggression and now proceeds to utilize his pawn majority on the kingside.

- 31 h5?!

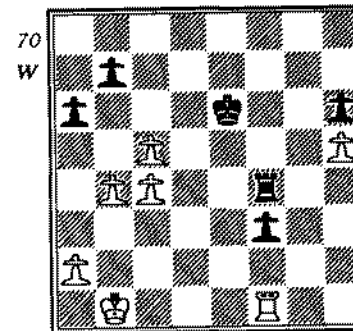
Too optimistic. More to the point was the immediate 31 c4 trying to gain a tempo over the game continuation. After both 31 ... f5 32 ♖e1 gxh4 33 ♖e5! and 31 ... gxh4 32 ♖f1 a draw would be in sight.

- 31 ... f5
- 32 c4 f4
- 33 ♖e1 f3
- 34 ♖e6+ ♗d7
- 35 ♖f6 g4
- 36 ♖f4 Qe7!

Black is already a little better.

- 37 ♗xe7 ♗xe7
- 38 ♖xg4 ♖f8
- 39 ♖g1 ♖f4
- 40 ♖f1 ♗e6 (70)

The picture has changed drastically. White has been forced to part with his strong knight and his rook occupies a



passive post in front of the dangerous f-pawn. Still, the position is a draw with correct defensive play.

- 41 ♗c2 ♖xc4+
- 42 ♗d3 ♖xb4
- 43 ♖xf3 ♖h4
- 44 ♖f1 ♖xh5
- 45 ♖b1 ♖xc5
- 46 ♖xb7 ♗d5
- 47 ♖d7+?!

Frustrated by the unexpected turn of events, Timman fails to spot his opponent's threat. If White wants to set up a defence along the fourth rank he should do it immediately by 47 ♖b6 ♖c6 48 ♖b4 when, in comparison with the game, Black cannot achieve the desired formation with pawns on a5 and h5 defended from the side by the black rook. Timman's suggestion of 47 ♖h7 should also be good enough for a draw.

- 47 ... ♗e5
- 48 ♖e7+?

The last chance was 48 ♖h7. Now Karpov achieves the position he was aiming for, and

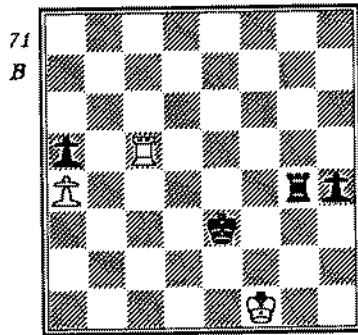


carries the day flawlessly with his inimitable technique.

- 48 ... ♖f5
- 49 ♗f7+ ♜g6
- 50 ♗f4 ♜g5
- 51 ♗a4 a5
- 52 ♜e2 ♗f5
- 53 ♗a3 ♜g4
- 54 ♗c3 h5
- 55 ♗c8 h4
- 56 ♗g8+ ♗g5

Also good is 56 ... ♗h3.

- 57 ♗a8 ♜g3
- 58 ♜f1 ♜f3
- 59 ♗c8 ♜e3
- 60 a4 ♗g4
- 61 ♗c5 (71)



61 ... h3!

A terrible mistake would have been 61 ... ♗xa4?? 62 ♜g2! and the position is a theoretical draw, e.g. 62 ... ♗a1 63 ♗e5+ ♜d4 64 ♗f5! a4 65 ♗f4+ ♜e3 66 ♗f3+ ♜e4 67 ♗c3! ♜d4 68 ♗f3! and Black cannot make any progress. The only trap could be 68 ... a3 69 ♗b3 ♜c4 70 ♗f3 h3+ 71 ♗xh3?? ♜b4-+, but the calm 71 ♗h2! produces a drawn position.

62 ♗e5+

On 62 ♗c3+ Timman offers the following win: 62 ... ♜d2 63 ♗a3 (63 ♗xh3 ♗xa4 64 ♗h2+ ♜d1! 65 ♗h5 ♗f4+-) 63 ... ♗e4!-+ (but not 63 ... ♜c2? 64 ♗xh3 ♗xa4 65 ♗h5 ♗f4+ 66 ♜e2 a4 67 ♗c5+ drawing).

- 62 ... ♜f3
- 63 ♗h5 ♜g3
- 64 ♜g1 ♗xa4-+

The game is decided. White could have been spared the rest by resigning here, but was probably kicking himself for missing so many wins in the early phases of the struggle.

65 ♗g5+ ♜h4 66 ♗c5 ♗g4+ 67 ♜h2 a4 68 ♗c3 ♗g2+ 69 ♜h1 ♗g4 70 ♜h2 ♗g2+ 71 ♜h1 ♗g3 72 ♗c4+ ♗g4 73 ♗c3 ♗b4 74 ♗a3 ♗g4 75 ♗c3 ♜g5 76 ♜h2 ♗h4 0-1

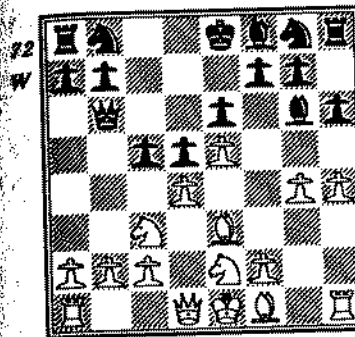
An absorbing fight and a tribute to the art of defence!

Game 10  
Timman - Seirawan  
Hilversum (2nd Match  
Game) 1990

1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 e5 ♖f5 4 ♜c3 e6 5 g4 Qg6 6 Qge2 c5 7 h4 h6 8 Qe3

8 ... ♗b6! (72)

Black's most flexible and aggressive continuation, this line is currently thought to give White quite a few headaches. Early queen outings always look suspicious, but this is hardly the case here: the queen gives ample protection to the

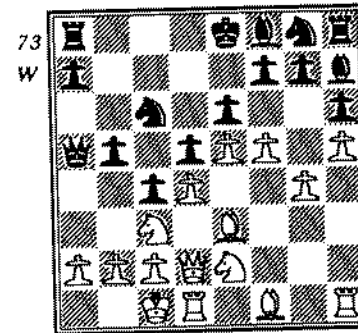


c-pawn while at the same time furthering Black's plans of attacking the centre and bringing the king to relative safety on the queenside.

9 f4!

Clearly the best. Dubious is 9 h5?!, merely driving the bishop where it wants to go. Although it is also mentioned elsewhere, since even top players have committed this sin it is worth repeating that such an advance is only apparently aggressive and in reality loses time. Perhaps the most famous example is Nunn-Seirawan, Lugano 1983, which continued 9 ... ♗h7 10 ♗d2 ♜c6 11 0-0-0!? c4! 12 f4 ♗a5 (12 ... ♗a6!; 12 ... 0-0-0 is Game 8) 13 f5 b5 (73)

14 ♜xd5! b4! (not 14 ... ♗xa2 15 ♜dc3 ♗a1+ 16 ♜b1 ♜b4 17 ♜c3 or 17 ♗g2 with good play for White, while in the important variation 14 ... ♗xd2+ 15 ♜xd2 exd5 16 ♜c3 0-0-0 17 ♗g2 there is more than enough compensation for the piece, e.g. 17 ... ♜xd4 18 ♗e3 and now

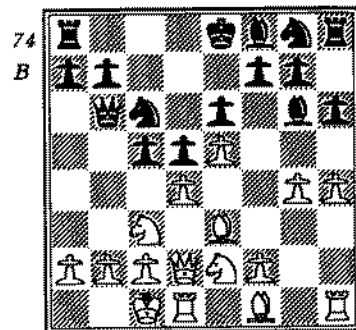


White is much better after either 18 ... ♜c6 19 ♗xd5 ♜xe5 20 ♗b7+ or 18 ... b4 19 ♜xd5 ♜b5 (not 19 ... ♜c6 20 ♜b6+ axb6 21 ♗xc6 and Black's position is a mess) 20 ♖f1! etc.) 15 ♜c7+! ♗xc7 16 ♜f4 c3 17 ♗g2 ♜ge7 18 ♗c4 (wrong is 18 d5? exd5 19 ♜xd5 ♜xd5 20 ♗xd5 ♗e7+, while 18 fxe6 b3! 19 exf7+ ♜d7 20 axb3 ♗a5 21 bxc3 ♗xc3 leads to an unclear position, according to Nunn) 18 ... 0-0-0 19 fxe6 (Nunn offers 19 d5! with an unclear position; however, my research shows that after 19 ... exd5 (not 19 ... ♗xe5 20 ♗h6l or 19 ... ♜xe5 20 ♗a6+ ♜b8 21 dxe6 with complications favouring White since the black army is split in two by the enemy pawn wedge and there are serious mate threats) 20 ♜xd5 ♜xd5 21 ♗xd5 Black should avoid both 21 ... ♗xe5 22 ♗h6l with great pressure, and 21 ... ♜xe5 22 ♗b7+ ♜b8 23 ♗xd8+ ♗xd8 24 ♗a6 when Black's faraway pieces lack the time to assist their king, e.g. 24 ... ♗c7 25 ♖d1 ♗e7 26 ♗d5 or 24

... Qd7 25 Qd1 cxb2+ 26 Qxb2 Qc4+ (or 26 ... Qd6 27 Qxd6 Qc4+ 28 Qxc4 Qxd6 29 Qe4 etc.) 27 Qxc4 Qxd1 28 Qa6 with a winning attack for White; instead, he should play first the timely 21 ... cxb2+, since it is bad for White to play either 22 Qb1 because in the last long variation the h1-rook cannot come to d1 as it will be captured with check or 22 Qxb2 Qxe5+ when the black queen gains time to take the undefended Qe3) 19 ... Qb8 20 exf7 cxb2+ 21 Qb1 Qa5!+ 22 Qd3 Qc4 23 Qxc4 Qxc4 24 Qh2 Qd5 25 Qxd5 Qxd5! (25 ... b3 26 axb3 Qa6 27 Qxb2 Qa3+ 28 Qc3 Qxd5 29 Qd2! is unclear according to Nunn) 26 e6?! b3 27 axb3 Qa6 28 Qf4+ Qc8 29. Qxb2 Qa3+ 30 Qc3 Qa5+ 31 Qb2 Qa3+ 32 Qc3 Qb4+ 33 Qc4 Qe7 34 Qc3 Qa5+ 35 Qb2 Qa3+ 36 Qb1 Qc3 37 Qc1 Qxc1 38 Qxc1 Qa1+ 39 Qd2 Qxd4+ and 0-1. My analysis of Nunn's comments, along with the game Hendriks-Walker, European corr. Ch 1990, in which White attempted to improve one move earlier by playing 18 Qb1 Qge7 19 Qc4 0-0-0 20 d5 exd5 21 Qxd5 Qxd5 22 Qxd5 Qxe5 23 Qb7+ Qb8 24 Qxd8+ Qxd8 25 Qa6 Qd7 26 Qf4 f6 27 Qe1 b3 28 axb3 Qa3 29 Qa2 b1Q+ 30 Qxb1 Qe8 31 Qe3 Qg8 32 Qd3 Qc7 33 Qe4 Qe7 34 Qc3 Qd7 35 Qd3 Qc7 and 1/2-1/2, suggest that Black is at least equal in this

line and the most White can hope for is a draw; therefore the whole idea may be dismissed as theoretically unsound.

Another option for White that has been tried at top level is 9 Qd2, encountered in A. Sokolov - Karpov, Linares Ct (9) 1987. They continued 9 ... Qc6 10 0-0-0?! (74)



10 ... h5! 11 dxc5 Qxc5 12 Qxc5 Qxc5 13 Qf4 Qge7 14 Qxg6 Qxg6 15 f4 hxg4 16 h5 Qge7 17 Qe2 Qa5 18 a3 g3 19 Qg4 b5 20 Qhg1 b4 21 Qb1 bxa3 22 Qxa3 Qxd2 23 Qxd2 Qb8 24 Qxg3 g6 25 hxg6 Qxg6 26 f5 Qh1+ 27 Qd1 Qxd1+ 28 Qxd1 exf5 29 Qxf5 Qge7 30 Qh3 Qxe5 31 b3 Qb4 32 Qb1 f5 33 Qc3 Qf7 34 Qe2 Qf6 35 Qc3 Qh4 36 Qg2 Qh2 37 Qf4 d4 38 Qh3 Qxh3 39 Qxh3 Q7g6 40 Qd2 Qh4 41 Qb7 Qhf3+ 42 Qe2 d3+ 43 cxd3 Qd4+ 44 Qe3 Qxb3 45 d4 Qd7 46 Qh1 Qb6 47 Qd3 Qc1+ 48 Qd2 Qa2 49 Qf4 Qb4 50 Qc3 a5 51 Qb3 Qe7 52 Qg6+ Qe6 53 Qe5 Q4d5 54 Qc6 a4+ 55 Qa3 Qc7 56 Qb4 Qd6 57 Qe5 Qcd5+ 58 Qa3 Qe3 59 Qb4 Qc2+ 60

Qc3 Qe3 61 Qb4 Qc7 62 Qd3 Qec4 63 Qg2 a3 64 Qb3 Qe3 65 Qh1 Qbc4 66 Qe5 Qd6 67 Qxc4+ Qxc4 68 Qg2 f4 69 Qh1 Qe6 70 Qg2 Qf5 71 Qh1 Qg4 72 d5 Qf5 73 d6 Qe6 74 d7 Qxd7 75 Qd5 and 1/2-1/2.

It seems that Sokolov's idea is dubious, which makes it hard to understand the reason Karpov deviated from 8 ... Qb6 in his Qelfort game against Timman (9 f4! was not known at the time). Karpov later explained that 8 ... Qc6?! was in fact a blunder, as he forgot the correct move order!

9 ... Qc6

On 9 ... Qxb2? Nunn gives 10 f5 exf5 11 Qb1 Qa3 12 Qxd5±. It is also worth noting that Black may not attempt to take advantage of the fact that the square f4 is now occupied in order to play 9 ... h5, for similar reasons: after 10 f5 exf5 11 g5 the position is strategically lost.

10 f5 Qh7!

Risky is 10 ... exf5 11 Qf4! with a messy position, but favourable to White. Black voluntarily accepts that his bishop will be shut in, hoping to extricate it later under better circumstances.

11 Qd2 0-0-0

12 0-0-0 c4

The strategy for both sides is clearly outlined: White would like to destroy the base of the black central pawn chain; Black

is playing for higher stakes since he is after the white king. A sharp game is the outcome, where the slightest mistake can lead to catastrophe, therefore this specific line is critical for the variation as a whole.

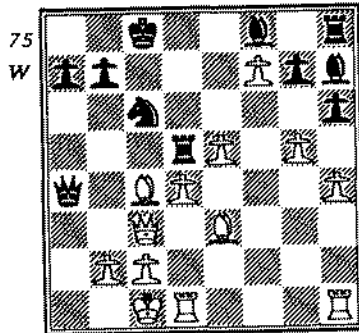
13 Qf4 Qa6!

Black is now poised for a massive attack on the queenside involving the pawn advance ... b7-b5-b4 as well as irritating invasions on b4 with the minor pieces. The best White can do is start grabbing pawns, both players burning the bridges behind them.

14 fxe6! b5

Naturally, the debate caused by this game continued in the years that followed. The encounter Prasad-Ravi, India 1991, saw Black winning quickly after 14 ... Qb4 (! Seirawan) 15 exf7 Qe7 (not 15 ... Qxa2+? 16 Qxa2 Qxa2 17 Qc3 Qe7 18 Qa3±, while the variation 17 ... Qe4 18 fxe6 Qxg8 19 Qh3! a5 20 Qg1! Qb4 21 Qa3!+- has already been mentioned in Chapter 1 under diagram 32) 16 a3 Qxc2 17 g5?? Qa1! and 0-1. But of course, things are not that simple. Instead of 17 g5??, essential was 17 Qf2 with an unclear position. White can also deviate earlier with 16 g5!? when Thipsay offers the continuation 16 ... Qxa2+ 17 Qxa2 Qxa2 18 Qc3 Qe4 as unclear. I disagree with this evaluation because of 19 Qa3!

Qxa3 20 Qh3+ Qb8 21 bxa3 Qxh1 22 Qxh1 and White's passed pawns are more than enough compensation for the exchange. A better try for Black is 18 ... Qc6!?, as after 19 Qxd5! Qxd5 20 Qxc4 Qa4 (not 20 ... Qa5 21 Qxa5! Qxa5 22 gxf6 gxf6 23 Qhg1±) an exotic position arises (75):



The threat ... Qf8-b4 seems devastating, but White can (and must) sacrifice his queen by 21 Qxd5! Qb4 22 Qb3! with crazy complications:

1) 22 ... Qa5 23 gxf6! gxf6 (23 ... Qxc3 24 bxc3 gxf6 25 Qb2) 24 Qxc6+! bxc6 25 Qb1 with the better chances for White;

2) 22 ... Qa1+ 23 Qd2 Qa5 (23 ... Qxb2? 24 Qxb4! Qxb4 25 Qb1+-) 24 gxf6 gxf6 25 Qhf1 when the position is difficult to assess. My feeling is that the pawn on f7 will gradually tie all of Black's forces to its blockade.

However, that is not the end of the story. Instead of the natural 19 ... Qxd5, Black has

two interesting alternatives at his disposal:

a) 19 ... Qe4! (sacrificing a third pawn, but it is evident that the move creates dangerous threats) 20 Qxc4 Qa4 21 b3! (21 Qb3? Qa6+) 21 ... Qa3+ (21 ... Qa2 22 b4 Qa4 23 Qb3! Qxb3 24 Qxb3 Qxd5 25 Qxd5 Qxd5 seems better for White in view of his mobile pawns) 22 Qb1 Qxd5!? (22 ... Qxd5 23 Qc1 Qe7 (23 ... Qb4 24 Qxb4 is ±) 24 Qhf1) with an unclear position.

b) 19 ... b5! (a cunning idea from the Greek master Ioakimidis, but White is not without resources) 20 Qd2! with a wide choice for Black:

b1) 20 ... b4? 21 Qxc4 Qxc4 22 Qxc4 Qe4 23 gxf6±;

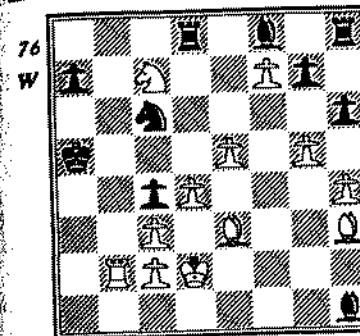
b2) 20 ... Qxd5?! 21 Qh3+ Qb8 22 Qa1 b4 (22 ... Qxa1 23 Qxa1 Qb4 24 Qg2+-) 23 Qxa2 bxc3+ 24 bxc3±;

b3) 20 ... Qe4! 21 Qa1! (this has to be played immediately, as 21 Qh3+? Qb7 22 Qa1 Qxh1! 23 Qxa2 Qxd5 is bad for White in view of the unfortunate position of the rook on a2 - compare with line b33 below) and now:

b31) 21 ... Qxh1 22 Qxa2 Qxd5 (threatening ... b5-b4 or ... Qf8-b4) 23 Qa6! b4 24 Qxc6+ Qb7 25 Qxc4+-;

b32) 21 ... b4 22 Qh3+ Qb7 23 Qxa2 bxc3+ 24 bxc3 Qxd5 25 Qb1±±; after 24 ... Qxh1? White, despite being down a rook for three pawns, exploits the in-

secure position of the black king by attacking directly: 25 Qb2+ Qa6 26 Qc7+ Qa5 (76)

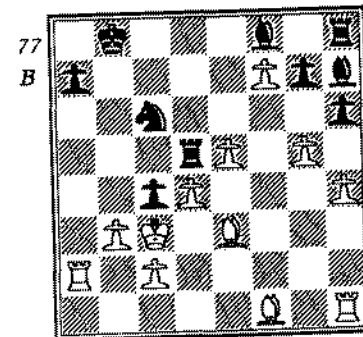


27 d5! Qxd5+ (27 ... Qa3 28 Qa2 Qa4 29 Qc5) 28 Qe2! Qa3 29 Qa2 Qa4 30 Qxd5 Qxd5 31 e6 and the threat 32 Qc5 together with the passed pawns guarantee an easy win;

b33) 21 ... Qxa1 22 Qh3+ Qb7 23 Qxa1 Qxd5 24 Qf2! Qb4 25 Qxb4 Qxb4 26 g6 when White's far advanced pawns may prove stronger than a rook;

b4) 20 ... Qb8!? (The idea of this move is to prevent White from transposing to the previous lines by Qf1-h3 as that would be met by ... b5-b4, trapping the white queen) 21 b3! (21 Qe2?! is probably inadequate in view of 21 ... Qe4! 22 Qa1 Qxh1! 23 Qxa2 Qxd5 24 e6! Qb7! (worse is 24 ... b4? 25 Qf4+ Qb7 26 Qe3 c3+ 27 bxc3 Qxa2 28 Qd3! with a strong attack, or 24 ... Qb4? 25 Qxb4 Qxb4 26 e7 Qxa2 27 exd8 Qxd8 28 Qf4+ Qb7 29 g6) 25 Qf4 (25 Qc1 Qb4 26 e7 Qxc3 27

exd8 Qxd8 28 bxc3 hxg5+) 25 ... Qb4 26 Qxb4 Qxb4 27 e7 Qxf7! 28 exd8 Qxd8 and White is in trouble as his pawn on d4 is hanging) 21 ... Qxd5 22 Qa1 b4! 23 Qxa2 bxc3+ 24 Qxc3 reaching a complex endgame (77):



White has three pawns for a piece and, at first glance, his king seems exposed. However, closer inspection shows that it is by no means easy to take advantage of this factor:

b41) 24 ... Qb4+ 25 Qxc4 Qe4 suggests itself. If White mechanically reacts by 26 gxf6? a horrible surprise is in store for him: 26 ... a5! (Threatening 27 ... Qxe5+ and 28 ... Qc8#!) 27 Qh3 Qxh1!! 28 hxg7 Qxe5+! 29 dxe5 Qxh4+ mating anyway.

However, there is a way out in 26 Qa6!. Despite the huge material investments this move entails it has the advantage of breaking the mating nets and sufficiently disturbing the coordination of the black pieces. After 26 ... Qxh1 27 Qxc6

White gets four pawns and tremendous activity for the sacrificed rook but the real point of 26 ♖a6! is revealed only after 26 ... ♗b7 27 ♖xc6! ♗xc6 28 ♗xb4 ♖b8+ 29 ♗a3 ♕xh1 30 gxf6 gxf6 31 c4! when White's four connected passed pawns look like a tidal wave capable of overcoming all kinds of resistance. A truly remarkable case!

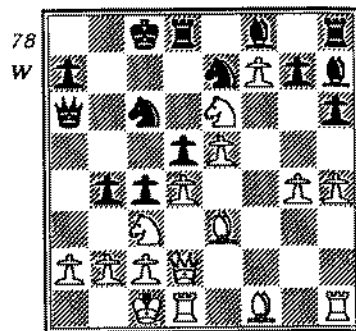
b42) 24 ... cxb3 25 cxb3 ♕e4 is met by 26 ♕g2. If Black plays 25 ... ♕b4+ first, then after 26 ♗b2 ♕e4 (26 ... ♗xd4 27 ♕c4±) White has the intermediate move 27 gxf6 to be followed by ♖h1-g1. Also worth analysing after 25 ... ♕b4+ is the daring 26 ♗c4!;

b43) Finally, the intriguing 24 ... ♕e4!? might well be Black's best. After 25 bxc4 ♖xd4 (25 ... ♕b4+ 26 ♗b3 is also unclear) 26 ♖b2+ ♗c7 27 ♖g1 an unclear position is reached with many tactical chances for both sides.

Let us return to the main game, after Seirawan's bold 14 ... b5:

15 exf7 ♗ge7  
16 ♗e6 b4 (78)

The fight has warmed up unusually rapidly as a result of Black's double pawn sacrifice for the initiative. Black's forces on the queenside are extremely menacing, so it seems the wrong moment for materialistic thoughts; White must give

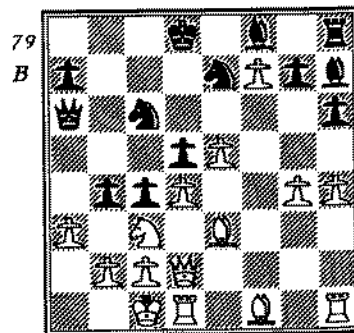


up a piece in order to stay alive.

17 ♗xd8?

An indication that White has not evaluated the situation properly, as now Black obtains an overwhelming attack. Timman should have preserved his agile knight by 17 ♗c5!, reaching an unclear position: after 17 ... bxc3 (Seirawan points out 17 ... ♗a5 18 ♗a4 ♗b8 19 ♗b1 ♗c8 20 b3 ♗b6 21 e6 ♕xc5 22 ♗xc5 c3 23 ♗h2+) 18 ♗xc3 ♗xa2 (18 ... ♗a5!?) 19 ♕h3± (analysis by Timman) White has two pawns plus positional pressure for the piece, but Black's chances should not be underestimated.

17 ... ♗xd8!  
18 a3! (79)



The only move to avoid immediate disaster.

18 ... bxc3?

Failing to reap the fruits of his labour. As Seirawan himself points out in *Inside Chess*, 18 ... bxa3! would have been deadly. I quote the American Grandmaster's analysis:

a) 19 ♗a2 axb2+ 20 ♗xb2 (20 ♗b1 ♗c8 with the idea ... ♗c6-b4 wins) 20 ... ♗c8 21 c3 ♗b5+ 22 ♗a1 ♗a5 23 ♗c1 ♗b1+;

b) 19 ♗b1 ♗b4 20 ♖c1 ♗ec6 21 b3 and now 21 ... ♗xc2-+ or 21 ... ♗a5-+;

c) 19 ♗g2!? ♗a5!-+.

19 ♗xc3 ♗c8  
20 g5!

The pawn on f7 needs support from an open g-file to prove its strength. As it soon becomes evident, Black's mistake on the 18th move has granted White excellent fighting chances.

20 ... ♗b6  
21 gxf6 gxf6  
22 ♕d2!

Overprotecting the critical b4 square and giving his queen freedom of movement along the third rank, White intends to meet the apparently crushing 22 ... ♗b4? by 23 ♗xb4! ♕xb4 24 ♕xb4 (Seirawan), when Black is completely lost despite his material advantage.

22 ... ♗a4!  
23 ♗b1 a5  
24 ♖g1 ♕b4  
25 ♖g8+?

Timman's intention undoubtedly was to divert the black bishop from its deadly surveillance of c2. However, an excellent piece of analysis by John van der Wiel proves that White missed a winning continuation here. I quote the Dutch GM's analysis from the magazine *Inside Chess*:

"25 ♖g8+ is in fact a mistake. Timman should have played 25 axb4!, when Black has two recaptures:

a) 25 ... ♗xb4 26 ♖g8+ ♗c7 (26 ... ♗d7 27 e6+ is no improvement, while 26 ... ♖xg8 27 fxg8♗+ ♕xg8 28 b3 ♗a2+ 29 ♗c1 cxb3 30 cxb3 ♕h7 31 ♗b2 wins for White) 27 b3!:

a) 27 ... ♗xb3+ 28 ♗xb3 cxb3; White now has his choice of 29 f8♗ or 29 ♕xb4 bxc2+ 30 ♗c1 cxd1♗+ 31 ♗xd1 ♖xg8 32 fxg8♗+ ♕xg8 33 ♕xa5 winning;

a2) 27 ... ♗a2+ 28 ♗c1 ♕xc2 29 ♗b2 stops Black's attack;

b) 25 ... axb4 (the recapture intended by Seirawan) 26 ♖g8+! ♗c7! (26 ... ♖xg8 27 fxg8♗+ ♕xg8 28 ♗f3 causes an unpleasant interruption of Black's attack. If 28 ... b3 (28 ... ♗xc2+ gives White the better ending) 29 ♗f8+! ♗c7 30 ♗g7+ ♗d7 31 cxb3 cxb3 32 ♕c3 is good for White. The series of queen checks is to dominate the black bishop) 27 f8♗ (this is best; if 27 ♖xh8 then 27 ... b3! is a rude awakening) 27 ... bxc3 28 ♖g7+ ♗d7 29 ♗d6+ ♗b6 30



Exh7 Exh7 31 Qxc3 and with his extra pawns White should win."

25 ... Exg8!

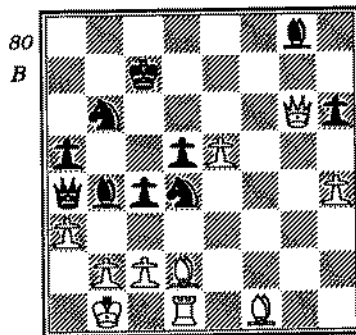
On 25 ... Qxg8? Timman's recommendation of 26 axb4 Qxf7 27 bxa5 seems better for White. In mutual time-trouble, Black rightly prefers to keep his dangerous bishop.

26 fxg8 ♖+ Qxg8

27 ♗f3! ♕xd4!

28 ♗f6+ ♖c7

29 ♗g6 (80)



29 ... Qc5??

van der Wiel discovered 29 ... Qe6! ("probably missed under the influence of time trouble and the sudden domination of the g8-bishop - a psychological block, also working during the post-mortem"), when White is defenceless. "Even after the best line 30 Qf4 (30 Qxb4 Qf5 31 Qd6+ ♖b7 32 ♗h5 ♗xc2+ 33 ♖al ♕a4) 30 ... Qf5 31 e6+ ♖b7! 32 ♗g7+ ♖c6! 33 ♗xd4 ♗xc2+ 34 ♖al (very attractive is 34 ♖a2 c3 35 Qc1 ♗b1+ 36 ♖b3 Qc2\*) 34 ... c3 White has to give up."

- 30 Qe3 ♕xc2
- 31 Qxc5 ♕xa3+
- 32 ♖c1 ♕d7
- 33 Qxa3 c3
- 34 ♗d6+ ♖d8

Black's flag fell in this hopeless position.

It is quite notable that Timman, in his notes to this game (published in *Informator 50*), gives 25 ♗g8! as the only move and fails to spot 29 ... Qe6!, thinking that White wins after 29 ♗g6. I can explain this slip through my personal experience, knowing that chess-players are asked to comment on important games during tournaments or immediately after, when the nervous tension is still there.

1-0

This is probably the most important game for the assessment of the 4 ♕c3 e6 variation.

Game 11

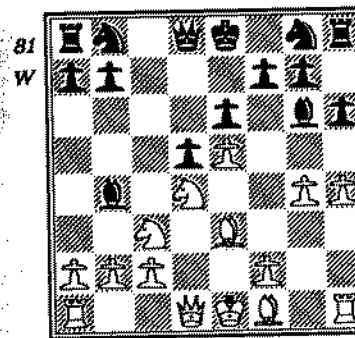
Kotronias - Speelman  
New York 1990

- 1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 e5 Qf5 4 ♕c3 e6 5 g4 Qg6 6 Qge2 c5 7 h4 h6 8 Qe3

- 8 ... cxd4
- 9 ♕xd4 Qb4 (81)

In this continuation Black plays simple chess, trying to complete the development of his pieces as quickly as possible without worrying about small concessions in the centre. This

is an acceptable method, since the bishop move prepares a comfortable development of the king's knight.

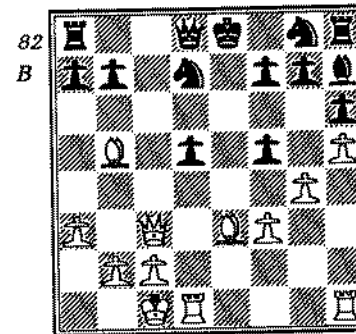


10 h5 Qh7!

The best move in the position. 10 ... Qe4 (given an ! by Seirawan) was played in Timman-Seirawan, Tilburg 1990, but it seems to me that inserting f2-f3 favours White. After 11 f3 Qh7 the game continued 12 Qd3 Qxd3 13 ♗xd3 ♕d7 14 0-0-0 Qxc3! 15 ♗xc3 ♖c8 16 ♗e1 ♕xe5 17 Qf4 ♕c6 18 ♕f5 ♖f8! 19 Qd6+ ♕ge7 20 ♕xe7 ♕xe7 21 ♗e5! ♖g8! 22 Qxe7 ♗xe7 23 ♖xd5 ♗c7 24 ♗xc7 ♖xc7 25 ♖b5? (Seirawan suggests 25 ♖d8+ with a slight advantage for White, while now it is Black who gets the upper hand) 25 ... ♖f8 26 f4 ♖e7 27 b3 ♖d8 28 ♖d1 ♖xd1+ 29 ♖xd1 ♖d6 30 a4 a6 31 ♖b4 e5 32 ♖d2 exf4 33 ♖xf4 ♖e5 34 ♖f5+ ♖e6 35 c4 g6 36 ♖d5 f5 37 gxf5+ gxf5 38 ♖e3 ♖g7 39 ♖d4 ♖g3 40 ♖e5+ ♖f6 41 b4 ♖a3 42 a5 ♖a4 43 ♖d5 ♖xb4 44 ♖e6+ ♖g5 45 ♖b6 ♖a4 46 ♖xb7 ♖xa5+ 47 c5 ♖xh5 48

♖b1 f4 49 ♖d6 ♖a2 50 ♖c1 ♖d2+ 51 ♖e6 ♖g4 52 c6 ♖d8 53 c7 ♖c8 54 ♖d7 ♖xc7+ 55 ♖xc7 f3 56 ♖d6 f2 57 ♖g7+ ♖f3 58 ♖f7+ ♖e2 59 ♖e7+ ♖d2 60 ♖f7 ♖e1 61 ♖e7+ ♖f1 62 ♖h7 a5 63 ♖c5 ♖e2 and ♖-♖.

However, the natural 12 ♗d2! is stronger, for example 12 ... ♕d7 13 a3! Qxc3?! (13 ... Qa5 is better, but 14 f4! ♕e7 (... ♕d7-c5 is no longer possible) 15 Qd3 leaves White on top) 14 ♗xc3 ♕xe5 15 Qb5+ ♕d7 16 ♕f5! exf5 17 0-0-0! with a tremendous attack on Black's exposed king (82):



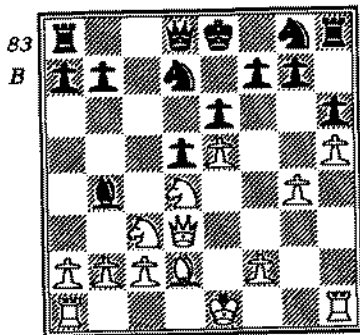
The point is that with the pawn on f3 there is no defence by interposing the knight on e4 after 17 ... ♕f6 18 Qc5 ♗c7 19 ♖he1+. Thus, relatively best for Black is to decline the sacrifice by playing 16 ... Qxf5 17 gxf5 ♕f6, although the bishop pair and the open g-file give White good chances for a successful onslaught.

11 ♗d2

Another important option here is 11 Qd3 Qxd3 12 ♗xd3



Qd7 13 Qd2!? (83) (13 0-0-0 is similar to Timman-Seirawan mentioned above, while 13 f4 Qc8 14 Qd2 Qxc3!? 15 Qxc3 Qc5 is difficult to evaluate as Black gets e4 for his knight)



13 ... Qc8 (13 ... Qxc3 14 Qxc3 Qc8 15 Qe3) 14 0-0-0!?, with a complicated struggle ahead, slightly favourable to the first player.

11 ... Qd7  
12 a3?! Qa5?!

Black should have grabbed the e-pawn by 12 ... Qxc3! 13 Qxc3 Qxe5 as there is no clear refutation at White's disposal.

13 b4?

White thoughtlessly overextends on the queenside. Correct was 13 f4! keeping a slight advantage, while now the balance swings slightly towards Black's side.

13 ... Qb6!  
14 f4

Seirawan gives '14 f4±'. In the *post-mortem* Speelman and I agreed that the position is unclear, but when I analysed alone I could not find a proper

place for my king and concluded that the position is unsatisfactory for White.

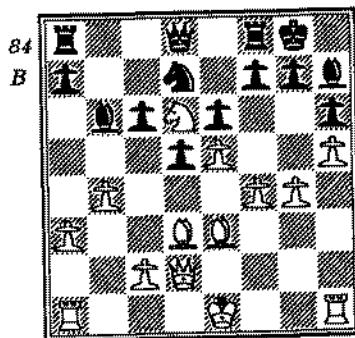
14 ... Qe7  
15 Qcb5?

Appropriate here is 15 Qd3, but White persists in an attacking approach while his king is still unsafe.

15 ... 0-0  
16 Qd6? Qc6!

Now Black is almost winning, since White suffers from much worse development. The d6-knight, being isolated from fellow pieces may prove to be a liability instead of the hoped-for powerhouse.

17 Qxc6 bxc6  
18 Qd3 (84)



18 ... f6!  
Undermining the foundation of White's outpost.

19 Qxh7+ Qxh7  
20 Qxb6 axb6  
21 Qd3+ Qg8  
22 0-0-0 c5?

Trying to be "fancy" where simple means are effective. Speelman saw during the game the correct 22 ... fxe5 23 g5

exf4! 24 Qg6 (24 gxf6? Qe5) 24 ... Qe7 25 gxf6 Qf6! 26 Qg5 Qh7, but was afraid of 27 Qe4 which achieves nothing after 27 ... dxe4 28 hxg7 Qxg7 29 Qxd7 Qf7 30 Qxf7 Qxf7 and White is clearly lost.

23 Qg6! Qe7  
24 g5

Due to Black's 22nd move mistake, White has taken over the initiative. This opening is difficult to handle indeed!

24 ... fxf5  
25 f5! Qxe5  
26 Qxe6+ Qxe6  
27 fxe6 Qf6  
28 Qb5! Qc8  
29 e7! Qe6 (85)

nullify any danger.

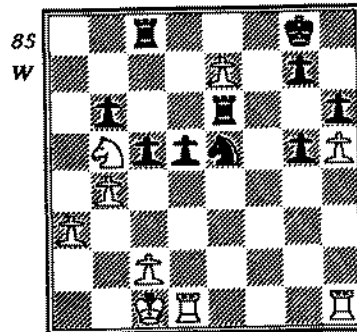
31 ... cxb4  
32 axb4 Qf3!  
33 Qxe8 Qxe8  
34 Qxd5 g4

This advance guarantees Black adequate counterchances. Having survived a near disaster, I decided to settle for a draw, ignoring the fact I was an exchange up.

35 Qf1 Qe2  
36 Qf5?! g6!  
37 hxg6?! Qg7  
38 Q5xf3

The ending is drawn, as both sides will sacrifice their rook for the enemy passed pawn, therefore ...

½-½



30 e8Q+!  
A rare but noteworthy motif. No matter how Black recaptures, he must surrender the exchange.

30 ... Qxc8  
31 Qc7

As a result of all the complications, White even enjoys a slight advantage here. Nevertheless, Speelman manages to find enough counterplay to

This is the only time I have ever been in danger while playing the Caro Advance Variation, while it is obvious that improvements for White are available. Since I have essayed 3 e5 against many strong grandmasters (Speelman was at his peak when this game was played), I believe this fact is enough in itself to demonstrate the inherent strength of the 4 Qc3 system.

### Conclusion

6 ... c5 is hard to crack, but it leads to the sort of game that 3 e5 players usually aim for: sharp positions, full of thrust and counterthrust, demanding excellent preparation and understanding of the dynamic

aspects of the opening. Many lines are quite entertaining, but when you are sitting at the board you do not always think the same!

Summing up, it seems that the future of the Caro Advance Variation as a whole will be mostly determined by developments in this line.

### 3 The 4 ... ♖b6 Variation

Game 12

**Nimzowitsch - Capablanca**

*New York 1927*

The game that follows was awarded a special prize for the best played game in the tournament. After a dubious opening, Capablanca manages to freeze his opponent's demonstration on the kingside and wins elegantly by penetrating the enemy position with his heavy pieces. The ideas behind the opening of this game have been analysed in some detail in Chapter 1, therefore here the analysis will concentrate more on the middlegame aspects.

1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 e5 Qf5

4 Qd3?!

I quote Irving Chernev's annotation from his book *Capablanca's Best Chess Endings* (Atkins-Capablanca, London 1922): "White hastens to get rid of his good bishop, a strategic error repeated by Nimzowitsch in his famous 1927 encounter against Capablanca". Wise words, but for the wrong reason! The truth is that Chernev's comment is absolutely

correct, since it accompanies White's 4th and not his 5th move (in the above-mentioned games White unwisely exchanged his good bishop before Black moved his queen to b6). However, this is merely a result of hero-worship rather than objective thinking, as Capablanca continued in both games with a direct transposition to our analysis, and was still praised by Chernev.

4 ... Qxd3

5 ♗xd3 e6

6 ♕c3 ♗b6?!

7 ♕ge2 c5?!

A premature thrust. More to the point is 7 ... ♕e7, as we shall see in the next three games. Another option is 7 ... ♗a6, but it will be analysed in Kotronias-Khalifman (Game 14) since after 7 ... ♕e7 8 0-0 ♗a6 it transposes.

8 dxc5 Qxc5

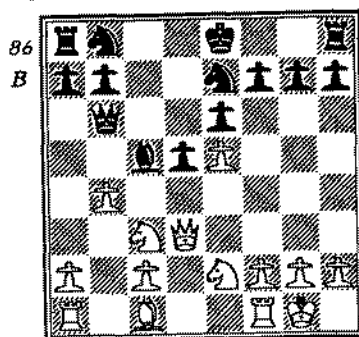
9 0-0 ♕e7?!

9 ... ♕d7 10 ♕a4 ♗c7 11 ♕xc5 ♗xc5 12 ♗g3 ♕e7 13 ♗xg7 ♗f8 14 ♗xh7 ♕xe5 15 ♕e3 ♗c7 16 ♕d4 ♕Sg6 17 ♗h3 a6 18 ♗fel 0-0-0 19 ♕g5± Kotronias-Gausel, Reykjavik 1988; White's

plan is to follow up with ♖h3-g3, h2-h4.

10 ♔a4?!

The opening play has been inaccurate, but in those days people tended to focus their attention more on the middle-game. To set the historical record straight, White misses a good chance to gain the advantage by 10 b4! (86)



This was missed not only by Nimzowitsch, but also by various commentators (including Chernev). After 10 ... ♗xb4 (10 ... ♗xb4 11 ♖b1 ♗a5 12 ♔b5±) 11 ♔b5 ♔a6 12 ♗a3 ♗a5 13 ♗xc5 ♔xc5 14 ♔d6+ ♗d7 15 ♗g3 ♖hg8 16 ♔xf7 White gets a clear advantage. The game continuation is much less enterprising, playing into Capa's hands.

- 10 ... ♗c6
- 11 ♔xc5 ♗xc5
- 12 ♗e3 ♗c7
- 13 f4 ♔f5
- 14 c3?!

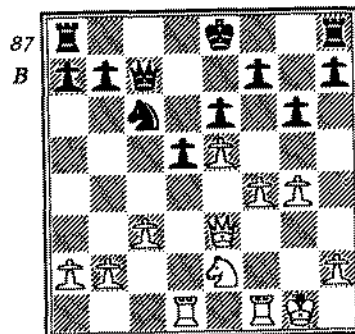
Preferable was Alekhine's recommendation of 14 ♗f2 (to be followed by c2-c4), when

White might still have counted on an advantage. One gets the impression that Nimzowitsch's play is a little too passive for the occasion.

- 14 ... ♔c6
- 15 ♖ad1 g6
- 16 g4??

And now he bursts forth with this inopportune gesture. In fact this is a positional blunder, allowing Capa to stabilize the pawn structure on the kingside.

- 16 ... ♔xe3
- 17 ♗xe3 (87)



17 ... h5!

Analysts have failed to comment on this, considering White's reply forced. However, as the next note proves, the move demanded precise calculations and deep evaluation of a certain position.

18 g5?!

Losing kingside pawn mobility, but others were uninspiring:

- a) 18 h3? hxg4 19 hxg4 0-0-0+ as Black threatens both ... ♖h8-h4 and ... g6-g5;
- b) 18 f5 gxf5 (18 ... ♗xe5? 19

♗xe5 ♔xe5 20 fxe6 fxe6 21 ♔d4 is equal) 19 gxf5 0-0-0! (19 ... ♔xe5? 20 fxe6 fxe6 21 ♔d4 0-0-0 22 ♔b5±) and now:

b) 20 ♔f4 ♔xe5! 21 fxe6 fxe6 22 ♖de1!? (22 ♔xe6 ♔g4! 24 ♗d2 ♗b6+ 25 ♔d4 ♗g6!±; 22 ♗xa7 ♖hg8+ 23 ♗h1 ♗c6±) 22 ... ♔g4! 23 ♗a7 (on 23 ... ♗xe6+ ♗b8, threatening ... ♖hf8) 23 ... ♖hg8 24 ♗h1 ♖df8 25 ♗a4 (after 25 ♗a8+ ♗d7 26 ♗a4+ ♗c6 27 ♗xc6+ bxc6 28 h3 ♔h6 29 ♔xh5 ♔f5 Black has more than enough compensation for the pawn because of his active king and central pawn roller) 25 ... ♗d6! (preparing ... e6-e5, or ... ♗c8-b8) with excellent chances for Black; 26 ♖xe6? is a bad mistake because of 26 ... ♖xf4! 27 ♗a8+ ♗c7 28 ♗a5+ ♗b8 29 ♖xd6 ♖xf1+ 30 ♗g2 ♔e3++ with mate soon to follow.

b2) 20 ♔d4 (relatively best) 20 ... ♗b6! 21 ♗h1 (21 ♗h3 ♗b8! 22 ♗h1 ♔xd4 23 cxd4 ♖c8±) 21 ... ♖hg8 22 ♗h3 ♔xd4 23 cxd4 ♗b8! and Black is better because he has a safer king.

18 ... 0-0

Black has a strategically won game. His king is safe on the kingside while on the other wing he enjoys the prospect of a minority attack. However, the way in which Capablanca makes use of his advantages is a priceless lesson for every chessplayer.

19 ♔d4 ♗b6

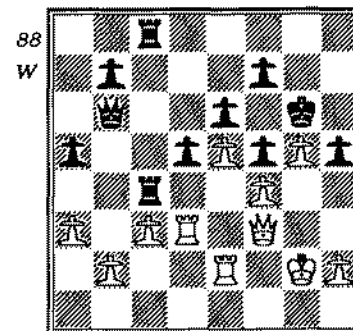
- 20 ♖f2 ♖fc8
- 21 a3 ♖c7
- 22 ♖d3 ♔a5
- 23 ♖e2 ♖e8
- 24 ♗g2 ♔c6
- 25 ♖ed2 ♖ec8
- 26 ♖e2 ♔e7!
- 27 ♖ed2 ♖c4

Capa's plans begin to take shape. His knight is ready to jump to f5 in order to challenge White's stronghold on d4. That would allow his rooks to penetrate into the heart of the enemy position.

- 28 ♗h3?! ♗g7
- 29 ♖f2 a5
- 30 ♖e2 ♔f5!
- 31 ♔xf5+ gxf5
- 32 ♗f3

On 32 ♗xh5? the reply 32 ... ♖h8 33 ♗f3 ♖h4 wins easily.

32 ... ♗g6 (88)



Everything goes as planned. In the next few moves Black improves the positions of his pieces, by slowly infiltrating through the half-open c-file.

- 33 ♖ed2 ♖e4
- 34 ♖d4 ♖c4
- 35 ♗f2 ♗b5

36 ♖g3 ♗cxd4!  
Abandoning the plan of a minority attack by ... ♗b5-b3, ... b7-b5-b4, as he gets the chance to create a new weakness on d4. White cannot recapture with the rook in view of the reply 37 ... ♗e2, winning instantly.

- 37 cxd4 ♗c4
- 38 ♖g2 b5!
- 39 ♖g1 b4
- 40 axb4 axb4
- 41 ♖g2 ♗c1!

Capablanca is tightening the noose move by move. No doubt, Nimzowitsch must have felt extremely uncomfortable during the final phase of the game.

- 42 ♖g3 ♗h1!
- 43 ♗d3

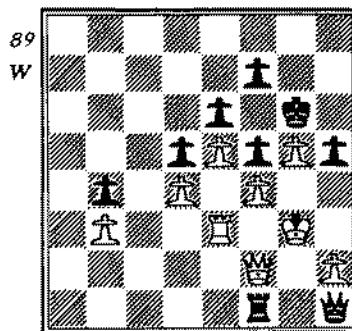
The only move. On 43 ♗e2 (trying to prevent ... ♗e4-e1), the simplest is 43 ... ♗xe2 44 ♗xe2 ♗g1+, winning the d-pawn.

- 43 ... ♗e1
- 44 ♗f3 ♗d1
- 45 b3

White has entered a zugzwang situation. The proof:

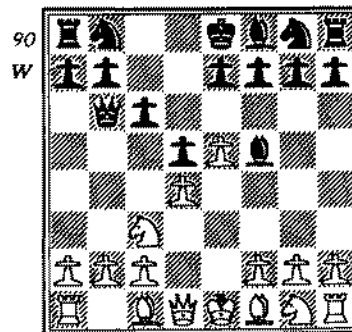
- a) 45 h3 ♗g1+ 46 ♗h4 ♗g4+!
- b) 45 ♗h3 ♗d2!-+;
- c) 45 ♗e3 ♗f1 46 ♗e2 ♗g1+-+;
- d) 45 ♗b3 ♗e4-+.
- 45 ... ♗c1!
- 46 ♗e3 ♗f1 (89)
- 0-1

A masterly conclusion by a great champion.



Game 13  
Kotronias - King  
New York 1990

- 1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 e5 ♕f5 4 ♗c3
- 4 ... ♗b6 (90)



This is the main alternative to 4 ... e6. Black wants to avoid the labyrinth of variations already examined and steer the game to positional channels. For quite some time 4 ... ♗b6 was successful as most players with White concentrated their efforts on the risky continuation 5 g4!? ♗d7. However, it seems extravagant to play 5 g4 when the black bishop still has

the option to retreat to d7; the resulting positions closely resemble the French except for the extra move g2-g4, which looks more like a weakness than a threatening gesture. For example, White's overextension gave him no advantage in the game Timman-Kamsky, Tilburg 1990, after 6 ♗a4 ♗c7 7 ♗e3 (Editor's note: 7 ♗c5 e6 8 ♗d3 h5? Klinger-Hodgson, Oakham 1984) 7 ... e6 8 ♗g2 ♗e7 9 f4 ♗a6!? 10 ♗f3 h5 11 h3 ♗g6 12 ♗c3 ♗e7 13 ♗e2 ♗h4 14 ♗xh4 ♗xh4+ 15 ♗f2 ♗xf2+ 16 ♗xf2 hxg4 17 hxg4 0-0-0 18 0-0-0 c5!. Kamsky suggests 15 ♗f1 ♗e7 16 gxh5 0-0-0 17 ♗f3 as a possible improvement for White, but I do not know many players who would be willing to venture this.

5 ♗d3!?

White exchanges his 'good' bishop for the sake of quick development. Although this may not suit everyone's style, practice has shown that it is not easy for Black to reach equality. Remarkably enough, Seirawan's recent book on the Caro Advance does not even mention this move at this specific moment; our Main Game and others are mentioned there only through transpositions, even though the correct move order is 4 ♗c3 and only after 4 ... ♗b6, 5 ♗d3.

5 ... ♗xd3  
Extremely risky is 5 ...

♗xd4?!. After 6 ♗f3!? ♗g4 7 h3:

a) 7 ... ♗xg2 8 ♗g1 ♗xh3 9 ♗f1 ♗xc2 (9 ... ♗h5 10 ♗g5 ♗xc2 11 ♗xc2 ♗xf3 12 ♗g2+-) 10 ♗e2 (10 ♗xc2!?), e.g. 10 ... ♗h5? 11 ♗g5 ♗h1 12 ♗xc2 ♗xf3 13 ♗g2; therefore Black must retreat with 10... ♗c8 and face a strong attack in exchange for a minimal material investment by White. Editor's note: Lassen-Bergmann, Danish League 1991/92 saw Black try 10 ... ♗d7 but then he had problems developing: 11 ♗xc2 e6 12 ♗e3 ♗e7 13 ♗d4 ♗f5 14 ♗xf5 exf5 15 0-0-0 g6 16 ♗c4 ♗c7 (16 ... ♗g7 17 ♗xd5 cxd5 18 ♗xd5 0-0 19 ♗f6+ ♗xf6 20 ♗xd7 ♗xd7 21 ♗xf5) 17 ♗xd5! ♗d7 18 ♗xd7 ♗xd7 19 ♗d1 ♗xd1+ 20 ♗xd1 ♗g7 21 ♗xf7+ 1-0.

b) 7 ... ♗h5 8 0-0 ♗xd3 9 cxd3 e6 10 ♗b3 (Lars Bo Hansen suggests 10 ♗e2 - ed.) White has a huge lead in development and some ideas to embarrass the black queen by ♗c3-e2-f4.

Editor's note: instead of 9 ... e6 in this line, 9 ... ♗f5 was tried in the game Borge-K. Berg, Espergærde 1992: 10 ♗e1 ♗c8 11 e6 fxe6 12 ♗d4 ♗a6 13 ♗f3! ♗f6 14 g4 h6 15 ♗f4 g5 16 ♗d6! ♗f7 17 ♗xe6 ♗xe6 (17 ... c5 fails to, e.g. 18 ♗ael cxd4 19 ♗xe7 ♗xe7 20 ♗xe7+ ♗g6 21 ♗xd5 ♗f8 22 ♗xf6 ♗xf6 23 ♗e4+ (Borge) or 18 ♗xd5 cxd4 19 ♗xf6+! (L. Hansen) 18 ♗xe6

exd6?! (18 ... ♖xe6 19 ♕h2 ♖f7 20 ♖e1 ♖g7 21 ♗e3 e5!? 22 ♖xe5 ♖he8 is a better try according to L. Hansen) 19 ♖e1 ♖c5 20 ♗f5 ♖e8 21 ♖xg5+! hxg5 22 ♖xe8 ♗xe8 23 ♗xf6 ♖xh3 24 ♗g6+ ♖d7 25 ♗xg5 ♖xd3 26 ♗f5+ ♖e7 27 ♗h7+ ♖d8 28 ♗f7 (with its superior back-up, the white g-pawn proves much faster than its black counterpart on the d-file) 28 ... ♖d7 29 g5 ♖d4 30 f3 ♖h4 31 ♖e2! d4 32 ♖f4 ♖xf4 33 ♗xf4 ♖g7 34 ♗f7 ♕h8 35 ♗g8+ 1-0.

Also interesting is Patrick Wolff's suggestion of 6 ♖ce2!, with the following possibilities:

a) 6 ... ♗xe5?! 7 ♖f3 ♗f6 8 ♖g5 ♗e6 9 ♖d4 ♗g6 10 ♖xf5 ♗xg5 11 ♖c8! with the better position for White e.g. 11 ... a6 12 ♖xb7 ♖a7 13 ♖xc6+ ♖xc6 14 ♖xc6 ♖c7 15 c4! and the black king is exposed.

b) 6 ... ♗g4!? 7 f3! ♗xg2 8 ♖xf5 ♗xh1 when the black queen seems to be in danger but there is no clear way to capture it.

6 ♗xd3 e6

Forced. On 6 ... ♗a6?, 7 e6! ♗xd3 8 exf7+ ♖xf7 9 cxd3 e6 10 f4 is ±, Ufimtsev-Ravkin, USSR 1961.

7 ♖ge2

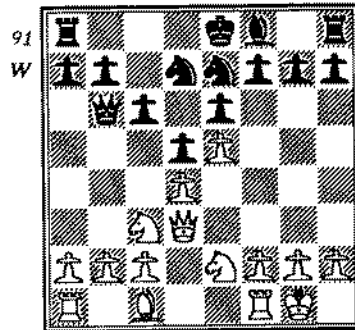
And there we have it! After no less than 63 years the opening of Nimzowitch-Capablanca is repeated in the same city. Could this be Christened the "New York Variation"?

7 ... ♖d7

This time Black chooses a solid continuation. Also possible are 7 ... ♖e7 and 7 ... ♗a6.

8 0-0 ♖e7 (91)

Transposing again to 7 ... ♖e7 8 0-0 ♖d7.



9 a4 c5

The alternatives 9 ... a6 and 9 ... a5 are examined in Game 15, Kotronias-Tukmakov.

10 a5 ♗c6?!

Black's queen is exposed on this square. Preferable was 10 ... ♗d8! 11 ♖g5!? with a complex struggle ahead.

11 dxc5 ♖xe5?

After 11 ... ♖xc5! 12 ♗f3! (Speelman) White has only a slight edge. The text is wrong on the basis that one should not open up the centre when lagging in development.

12 ♗g3 ♖Sg6 (92)

Playing the other knight to g6 would encourage an advance of White's f-pawn, but now the f8-bishop will remain blocked long enough for White to build up a strong initiative.

13 ♖d4! ♗xc5

strategic point of view, the game has already been decided.

16 ... b6

16 ... bxa6? 17 ♖xa6! is the tactical justification of the previous move.

17 ♖ad1! d4

18 ♗h3!?

18 ♖e4! ♖d5 19 c4!± is more exact, but I was obsessed with the idea of sacrificing something on d4 (18 ♖xd4? ♖f5+).

18 ... ♖c8 (94)

Black can hardly capture either piece as, in that case, the check on d6 would be murderous:

a) 18 ... dxe3? 19 ♖d6+ ♖d8 20 ♖cb5!+-;

b) 18 ... dxc3? 19 ♖d6+ ♖d8 20 ♖xf7+ and now:

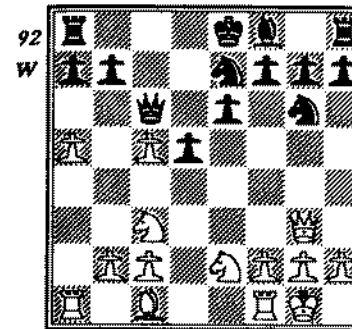
b1) 20 ... ♖c7 21 ♖d6 ♗xd6 (21 ... ♗e8 22 ♖fd1+-) 22 ♖xd6 ♖xd6 23 ♖d1!+-;

b2) 20 ... ♖e8 21 ♖d6+ ♖d8 22 b4! ♖d5 (22 ... ♖c7 23 b5 ♗d7 24 ♗f3 ♖b8 25 ♖d3!+-) 23 ♗f3! ♖xd6 (23 ... ♖xb4 24 ♗f7! ♖xd6 25 ♖g5+ ♖c8 26 ♖xd6!+-) 24 ♖xd5 ♖c7 (24 ... ♖e7 25 ♖g5+ ♖e6? (25 ... ♖e8 26 ♖xd6±) 26 ♗g4+! ♖xd5 27 ♖d1\*) 25 b5 ♗c4 26 ♖c5!+-.

Of course, I did not have to calculate all the above lines in detail. The pawn on a6 is a bone in Black's throat, creating dangerous mating threats.

19 ♖xd4! ♖d6

Trying to get rid of the annoying knight. 19 ... exd4 is simply out of the question,

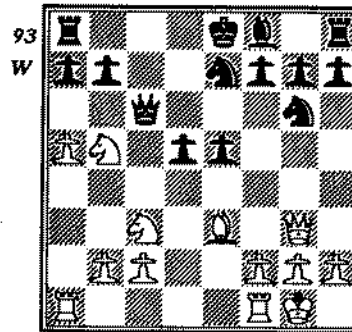


14 ♖e3 e5

Forced, since on any queen retreat, 15 ♖cb5 is crushing.

15 ♖db5 ♗c6 (93)

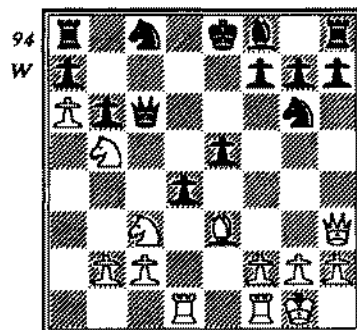
On 15 ... d4? I intended 16 ♖xd4! exd4 17 ♖c7+ ♖d8 18 ♖xa8 dxc3 19 ♖fd1+ ♖c8 20 ♖b6+! mating quickly.



16 a6!

The most difficult move of the game. White had to resist the temptation of recovering his pawn by 16 ♖xa7?! as that would be equivalent to surrendering the initiative. The text, on the other hand, has the dual advantage of 'installing' a useful asset in the shape of the dangerous a-pawn. From a





while on 19 ... ♔d6 White responds with 20 ♔e3 0-0 21 ♖f3!, entering a winning end-game.

20 ♖f3!

A temporary sacrifice in order to maintain the initiative. The move is based, as we shall see, on a hidden tactical point.

20 ... ♗xb5  
21 ♔xe5 ♔e7?!

With time-pressure approaching, Black fails to put up the best resistance: 21 ... ♔e7? is easily dismissed in view of 22 ♗xb5 ♖xb5 23 ♖f3 ♔c8 24 ♖b7 ♖c6 25 ♔d6+-, however the true point of 20 ♖f3! would be revealed only after 21 ... ♗xc3! 22 ♔b8+!! (22 ♔xc3+ ♔e7 is not so clear) 22 ... ♔e7 23 ♔d6! and now:

a) 23 ... ♗f4 24 ♔xe7+ ♔xe7 25 ♖h4+ f6 26 ♔xc6 ♔ce2+ 27 ♖f1 ♔axb8 28 ♔c7+-;

b) 23 ... ♖xd6! 24 ♔xd6 ♔d5 25 ♔xe7! ♔dxe7 26 f4!±.

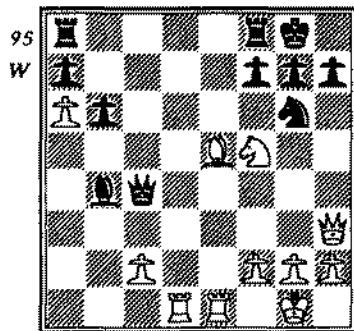
22 ♗xb5 0-0

On 22 ... ♖xb5, 23 ♔xg7 ♔g8 24 ♖xh7 should win without much trouble.

23 ♔d4 ♖c5  
24 b4! ♖c4

Taking the pawn would lose at least an exchange after 25 ♔c6. The game continuation allows White a brilliant finish.

25 ♔f5 ♔xb4 (95)



26 ♖h6! 1-0

It is mate next move.

Game 14

Kotronias - Khalifman  
Moscow 1987

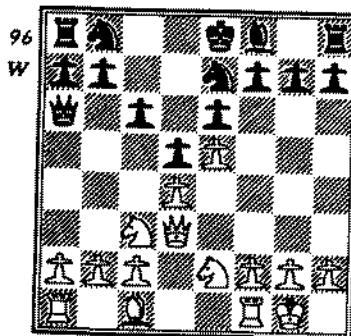
1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 e5 ♔f5 4 ♔c3 ♖b6 5 ♔d3 ♔xd3 6 ♖xd3 e6 7 ♔ge2  
7 ... ♔e7!

Black should opt for a flexible deployment of his pieces, before embarking on central operations. The alternative 7 ... ♖a6?! is of independent significance only after 8 ♖h3 b5 (8 ... ♔e7 is a direct transposition to the Main Game), but this is not particularly recommended. After 9 ♗f4, both 9 ... c5 10 dxc5 ♔xc5 11 0-0 12 ♔d3 ♔f8 13 ♔e2 ♔c6 14 ♔ef4, Bastriakov-Averbakh, USSR 1952, and 9 ...

b4 10 ♔ce2 c5 11 dxc5 ♔xc5 12 ♔d3 ♖c4? 13 b3! ♖b5 14 0-0 ♔e7 15 a3, Kotronias-Skembris, Kavala Z 1985, leave Black struggling for survival.

On the other hand, a typical blunder after 8 ♖h3 would be 8 ... c5? 9 ♔xd5! ♖a5+ 10 ♖c3 ♖xc3 11 ♔dxc3 ♔c6 12 ♔e3 cxd4 13 ♔xd4 ♔xd4 14 ♔xd4 ♔e7 15 ♔b5 ♔d5 16 c4+- Kotronias-Halldorson, Reykjavik 1988; if Black takes the offered knight by 9 ... exd5 there follows 10 ♖c8+ ♔e7 11 ♖xc5+ ♔e8 12 ♖c8+ ♔e7 13 b3! and White is winning.

8 0-0 ♖a6?! (96)



This idea is not good, although it stems from Capablanca. Correct is 8 ... ♔d7 9 a4 a6 as in Kotronias-Tukmakov or 9 ... a5 10 b3 h5 11 ♔g5 ♔f5 as in Kotronias-Orr (see the next Main Game). The queen is displaced on a6 and Black will soon have to admit his mistake by moving her again.

9 ♖h3 ♔d7  
10 a4!

This position and similar ones have been discussed in Chapter 1 (mainly diagram 16). White's last move restricts the mobility of the black queen and serves positional purposes as well.

10 ... ♖b6!?

A novelty at the time, this move is better than 10 ... ♔c8 11 ♔e3 c5?! 12 ♔b5!± Mokry-Pedersen, Groningen 1977/8. Nevertheless, the text is an admission that the manoeuvre ... ♖b6-a6 was unsuccessful.

11 b3?!

Vacillating. Correct is 11 a5! ♔d8 12 ♔f4±. This position has been extensively analysed in Chapter 1 (diagram 30).

11 ... ♔f5  
12 a5 ♖d8  
13 ♔d1

The basic idea of this manoeuvre is 14 ♔e3 and the central break c2-c4, opening up the position.

13 ... c5  
14 c4

Black is OK in the complications which follow. However, the game features the proper antidote to an early ... c6-c5 and was a useful predecessor to Kotronias-Tukmakov (Game 15). This break is a typical reaction by White in such positions and is greatly aided by the position of the white queen on h3.

14 ... cxd4  
After 14 ... dxc4 15 d5 White's

position is better than in the game, since the d1-knight is not obstructed by the enemy central pawn.

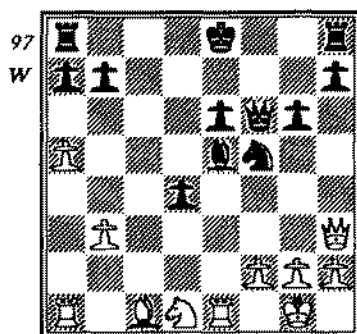
- 15 cxd5 ♗xe5
- 16 dxe6 fxe6
- 17 ♖f4 ♗f6
- 18 ♖e1 g6

During the game 18 ... ♔d6 looked better to me, since after 19 ♖h5?! ♗h4! 20 ♖xg7+ ♗d7 Black has a somewhat superior ending. However, there is the interesting alternative 19 ♖a2!? 0-0 20 ♖ae2, sacrificing a pawn for positional pressure.

- 19 ♖d3

In this position the pawn sacrifice 19 ♖a2!? is also worth trying.

- 19 ... ♔d6
- 20 ♖xe5 ♗xe5 (97)



- 21 f4

Freeing the d1-knight for aggressive action, after which White stands a little better.

- 21 ... ♔d6
- 22 ♖f2 ♗b4
- 23 ♖e5 0-0
- 24 ♗b2

It is impossible to play 24 1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 e5 ♗f5 4

♗g4? ♗h4 and now 25 ♗xf5 is unplayable due to the back rank mate on e1.

- 24 ... ♗f7
- 25 ♖e4 ♗e7
- 26 ♖e1 ♖ad8
- 27 ♗d3 ♖d5

Black chooses to return the pawn in order to activate his pieces.

- 28 ♗xd5 exd5
- 29 ♖g3 ♖g7!

This is the only move, as 29 ... ♖xg3? 30 hxg3 ♗f6 31 ♗xd4 ♗xd4+ 32 ♗xd4 a6 33 ♖e5 ♖d8 34 g4 unnecessarily allows White to launch an attack.

- 30 ♗xd4 ♗f6
- 31 ♗xf6 ♗xf6
- 32 ♗xf6 ♗xf6
- 33 ♖e2 ♖e6
- 34 ♗f2 ♖e4
- 35 ♖d1 ♖e6
- 36 g3

Naturally not 36 ♗xd5 ♗xe2+ and Black wins a piece.

- 36 ... ♖b4
- 37 ♗xd5 ♗xb3
- 38 ♖d7 ♖c5
- 39 ♖c7 ♖b5
- 40 ♖c8+

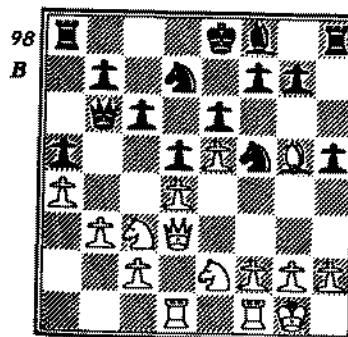
The last trap, since now 40 ... ♗g7 41 ♖d4 ♖xa5 42 ♖xc5 wins a piece for White.

- 40 ... ♗f7
- 41 ♖c7+ ♖-♖

Game 15  
Kotronias - Tukmakov  
Kavala 1991

- ♖c3 ♘b6 5 ♔d3 ♗xd3 6 ♗xd3 e6 7 ♖ge2 ♖e7 8 0-0
- 8 ... ♖d7
- 9 a4 a6

The game Kotronias - Orr, Dubai OL 1986, saw the double-edged 9 ... a5!?, rendering the advance ... c6-c5 dubious (because of the weakness of b5) for the sake of maintaining the pressure on d4. The game continued 10 b3 h5 (preparing ... ♖e7-f5, as the immediate 10 ... ♖f5 is met by 11 g4 ♖e7 12 ♖g3 with the idea ♗c1-a3) 11 ♗g5! (White perceives that his adversary will have to spare a tempo to exchange this bishop himself by ... ♗f8-e7, so he does not fall for 11 ♗a3 ♖f5 with a fine game for Black) 11 ... ♖f5 12 ♖ad1 (98)



12 ... f6? (tension during an Olympiad is far beyond the ordinary, especially in last round contests; here it caused Black to lose his sense of danger and commit a serious error at the very beginning of the game, while after the correct 12 ... ♖e7 13 ♗xe7 ♗xe7! the

fight would have just started) 13 exf6 gxf6 14 ♖f4!! (seizing the opportunity to prevent Black from castling; the Irish master probably expected 14 ♗c1 ♗d6 with an unclear position, but now White is just winning) 14 ... fxe5 (14 ... ♗xd4 15 ♗h3 loses as well) 15 ♖xe6 ♖e7 16 ♖fe1 (also possible is 16 ♗g3, but White prefers to apply direct pressure on the hapless black monarch) 16 ... ♖h6 17 ♗e2! (a multi-purpose move, which prevents 17 ... ♖xe6 because of the continuation 18 ♗xh5+ ♗d8 19 ♖xe6 and at the same time prepares to triple the major pieces along the open e-file; the game is practically over now) 17 ... ♗b4 18 ♖d3 ♗d6 (desperation, but 18 ... ♖xe6 would have only postponed the end) 19 ♖e3 ♖f6 20 ♖xf8 ♗xf8 21 ♖xe7 ♖e4 22 ♖e5 ♖f6 23 ♖xg5 ♖e8 24 ♖e5 1-0.

- 10 ♗h3 ♖f5
- 11 a5 ♗d8
- 12 ♖d1! c5

Facing the positional threat ♖d1-e3 which will force the exchange of Black's strong knight on f5, the Ukrainian Grandmaster hurries to show some activity in the centre. Taking into account Black's lack of development, this approach is rather committal, but not so much as 12 ... ♗h4 13 ♗d3 c5 (Bjarke Kristensen suggests 13 ... h5 followed by ...

g6 - Ed.) 14 c3 planning ♗f4±, Kotronias-K. Berg, Gausdal Troll Masters 1993.

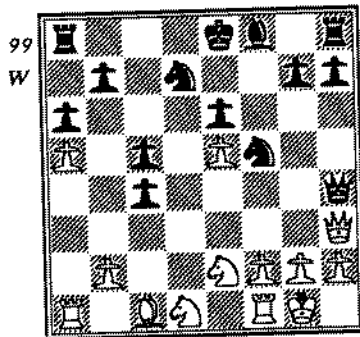
13 c4!

White reacts in typical and at the same time effective fashion.

13 ... dxc4  
14 d5 ♖h4

Unfortunately for Black, the threat to exchange queens is not enough to nullify White's initiative. With a series of unexpected queen manoeuvres, White manages not only to preserve, but actually to increase, the pressure.

15 dxe6 fxe6 (99)



16 ♖c3! ♗d4  
17 ♗xd4 ♖xd4  
18 ♖h3 ♖xe5  
19 ♗e3

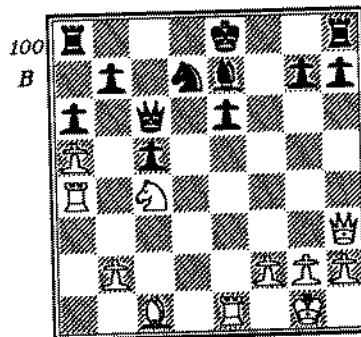
The exchanges that have taken place favour White, since it is much easier for him to bring new forces into the battle. Besides, it is quite clear that Black will have problems both during the middlegame and in any ending with equal material, since the white knight

on c4 is likely to dominate the proceedings.

19 ... ♗e7  
20 ♗xc4 ♖e4?!

The continuation 20 ... ♖f5? 21 ♖xf5 exf5 22 ♗e1+ ♖f7 23 ♗f4 threatening 24 ♗ad1 was highly undesirable, but Black's best was 20 ... ♖d5! 21 b3! 0-0 (21 ... ♗f6?! 22 ♖b2 ♗xb2 23 ♗xb2±) 22 ♖b2 ♖f5 23 ♖g3 with an unclear position which, however, I consider more pleasant for White.

21 ♗a4 ♖c6  
22 ♗e1 (100)



22 ... ♖xa4??

Black should seek salvation in an inferior endgame by 22 ... 0-0 23 ♖xe6+ ♖xe6 24 ♗xe6±, but instead suffers an illusion with disastrous consequences. We have already had the chance to observe plenty of occasions where the defender tires of warding off alternating threats in different parts of the board.

23 ♖xe6 ♖d8

My opponent had overlooked that 23 ... 0-0-0 is dealt a death blow by 24 ♗b6+.

24 ♖xe7+ ♖c8

25 ♗f4 1-0

25 ... ♖xc4 is met by 26 ♖e8+ with mate next move.

### Conclusion

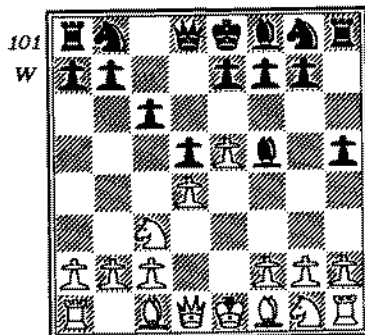
5 ♗d3!? is an interesting way to counter 4 ... ♖b6. Personal experience indicates that Black will have problems developing his pieces and achieving the

liberating thrust ... c6-c5. Also, the games Kotronias-King and Kotronias-Tukmakov demonstrate that Black should avoid an early fight for the centre when White's lead in development could make itself felt. However, White players should be alert, as a slight mishandling can change the picture surprisingly quickly.

## 4 The 4 ... h5 Variation

Game 16  
Nunn - Dlugy  
London 1986

1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 e5 Qf5 4  
Qc3 4 ... h5?! (101)



After White scored some beautiful wins employing the line 4 Qc3 e6 5 g4 Qg6 6 Qge2, Black players started searching for something new and less complicated. Given the benefit of hindsight, 4 ... h5?! is the most committal choice of all: White's kingside expansion is prevented, but at the cost of weakening the g5 square; Black also has to solve the problem of bringing his king into safety.

5 Qd3!

White takes a first step

towards shaking Black's control of f5. As a matter of principle, this is the only way to expose the weak side of 4 ... h5.

5 ... Qxd3  
6 Qxd3 e6  
7 Qf3 Qh6

Probably the best. For 7 ... Qb6 see Game 17, Short-Seirawan.

8 0-0 Qf5?!

This is a bit premature, inviting White's next move. Correct in my opinion is Nunn's 8 ... Qd7 with the following possible continuations:

a) 9 Qd1 c5 (9 ... Qf5 10 Qe2 c5 11 c4±) 10 Qg5 c4 (10 ... Qa5!? 11 dxc5 Qxc5 (11 ... Qxc5 12 Qb5) 12 Qe4 Qc7 13 Qd6+ Qxd6 14 exd6 Qc6 requires analysis) 11 Qxd8 cxd3 12 Qg5 dxc2 13 Qdc1±;

b) 9 Qe2 c5 10 c4 dxc4 11 Qxc4 Qb6 12 Qb5+ Qd7 13 Qxd7+ Qxd7 (13 ... Qxd7!?) 14 Qxh6! Qxh6 15 Qac1±.

In both these lines the queens come off the board, but White keeps a slight advantage due to his better development.

9 Qe2!

Continuing in the spirit of

his fifth move, White is ready to swap every piece that lands on f5, thus slowly denuding Black's kingside of its defenders.

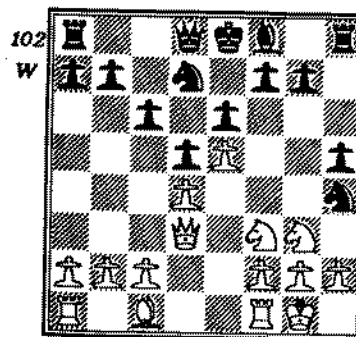
9 ... Qd7

In the game Glek-Vyzhmanavin, Lvov 1985, Black played 9 ... Qe7 but after 10 b3 Qd7 11 c4 Qf8 12 Qd2 Qg6 13 c5 it became clear that he was lacking a constructive plan. This is an important example, showing that White can generate play on all parts of the board if the second player resorts to passive manoeuvres.

10 Qg3

Also interesting is 10 Qd1!? with the idea b2-b3, c2-c4 but the text is more direct. Black now has to make a difficult choice.

10 ... Qh4?! (102)



Opening up the f-file by 10 ... Qxg3? 11 fxg3! would be suicidal. However, better is Nunn's suggestion 10 ... g6!? 11 Qxf5 gxf5 12 Qg5 Qe7 13 h4 with a slight plus for White due to the weakness of the

h-pawn. The text neglects Black's development without good reason.

11 Qxh4 Qxh4  
12 Qe3 Qd8  
13 Qfd1 Qc8?

Better is 13 ... Qe7, but White will continue similarly to Glek-Vyzhmanavin, gaining a big space advantage.

14 b3 c5?!

This move is consistent but wrong. Against a lesser opponent Dlugy might have got away with his plan, but objectively he should have reconciled himself to passive defence, starting with 14 ... Qe7. As it is, Nunn is able to exploit Black's inaccuracies in a simple and powerful manner.

15 c4!± cxd4 (103)

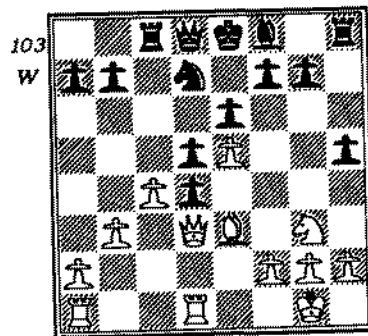
Black is left with a choice of evils. Nunn analyses: 15 ... h4 (15 ... Qb6 16 dxc5 Qxc5 17 Qxc5 Qxc5 18 Qe4±) 16 Qe2 (16 cxd4!? hxg3 17 dxe6 Qxe5 18 dxe5 Qxd3 19 exf7 Qxf7 20 Qxd3±) and now:

a) 16 ... Qb6 17 Qac1 dxc4 18 bxc4 cxd4 19 Qxd4 Qc5 20 Qe4 Qe7 21 Qg4±;

b) 16 ... dxc4 17 Qxc4 cxd4 18 Qxd4 Qc5 19 Qe4 Qxe3 20 Qxe3±.

16 cxd5! Qxe5

After 16 ... dxe3 17 dxe6 Black has no defence to the numerous threats. It is in this variation that the weaknesses created by ... h7-h5 become particularly glaring.



17 ♖xd4 ♗xd5?  
Losing at once, but 17 ... ♗g4 18 ♖xa7 could only prolong resistance.  
18 ♖a4+ 1-0  
Black resigned, since 18 ... ♗c6 19 ♖ac1! leaves White a clear rook ahead.

Game 17  
**Short - Seirawan**  
*Rotterdam 1989*

1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 e5 ♕f5 4 ♗c3 h5?! 5 ♕d3! ♗xd3 6 ♖xd3 e6 7 ♗f3  
7 ... ♖b6

Seirawan tries a different approach in comparison to the previous game; the king will hide on the queenside, while in the centre Black prepares to strike with ... f7-f6. However, in my opinion, his plan lacks chances of success for two reasons: firstly, the black king castles opposite a mobile pawn mass, ready to advance at the earliest opportunity; secondly, his counterplay in the centre will merely create a backward

e-pawn which is very difficult to advance without creating further weaknesses.

8 0-0 ♖a6  
Seirawan suggests 8 ... ♗e7!? and 8 ... ♗d7 which both bear a close resemblance to lines in Chapter 3. The only differences are the placement of White's king's knight and the advancement of Black's h-pawn, but I do not think these facts can drastically alter the evaluation of the position.

9 ♗d1  
White's loss of time is only apparent, since the black queen is far away from the centre and will need to move again in order to rejoin the action.

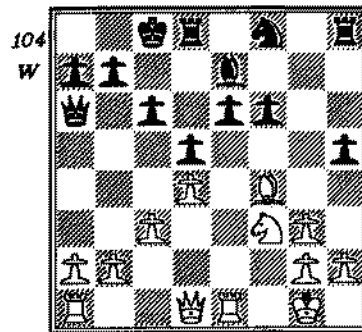
9 ... ♗e7  
10 ♗e2  
A typical motif that has been encountered in several cases in this book. White is ready to swap knights with ♗e2-g3, after Black's knight arrives on f5.

10 ... ♗d7  
11 c3 ♗f5  
12 ♕g5 ♕e7  
13 ♗g3! ♗xg3  
On 13 ... g6 the automatic reaction would be 14 ♗xf5 gxf5 15 h4, permanently fixing the weakness on h5.

14 fxg3 f6  
White's pressure along the f-file forces this pawn action which, although undoubtedly planned beforehand, cannot be sufficiently supported by pieces

and thus creates more weaknesses than counterplay.

15 exf6 gxf6  
16 ♕f4 0-0-0  
17 ♖e1 ♗f8 (104)



The black knight occupies a passive position on the back rank, while the rest of his pieces are also not conveniently placed. Black's inactive stance encourages White to expand immediately on the queenside.

18 b4!  
Ruling out ... c6-c5, and preparing to open lines against the black king, Seirawan, realizing how perilous the situation is becoming, decides to bring his queen back into play.

18 ... ♖b6!  
19 a4 ♕d6  
20 ♖d2 ♖c7  
21 b5 ♖h7!

The only move. Not only does it defend the second rank, it also prepares ... ♖h7-e7 giving his e-pawn ample protection. Now Short has to work hard to get something tangible.

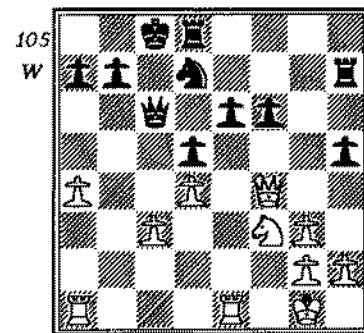
22 ♕xd6! ♖xd6  
On 22 ... ♖xd6 23 ♖f4±

(Cabrilo). But now the black queen is also lured away from controlling e5.

23 bxc6 ♖xc6  
24 ♖f4

White again occupies the fatal diagonal, this time with his queen and, very significantly, with tempo.

24 ... ♗d7 (105)



25 ♖h1!  
White would like to play 25 ♖ac1 ♖e7 26 c4 dxc4 27 d5 but this fails because of 27 ... ♖c5+!. Having realized this, Short sets his opponent a cunning trap ...

25 ... ♖e7!  
... which is spotted immediately. Black prepares to block the dangerous h2-b8 diagonal if, and when, appropriate.

26 a5 e5  
27 ♖f5 ♖b8  
28 ♖xh5 ♖xc3  
29 ♖f5 ♖de8  
30 ♖ec1

White holds a slight advantage due to his safer king, better endgame prospects and strongly-placed queen on f5, but Black is not totally devoid

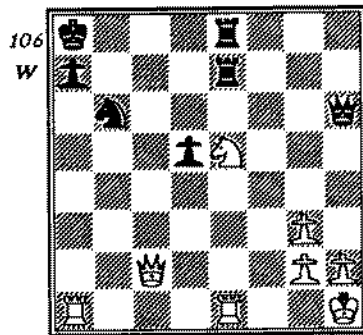


of resources. However, his next move (instead of the solid 30 ... ♖b4! to be followed by 31 ... ♗d6 as recommended by Cabrilo) unwisely removes the queen from the defence, allowing Short to start a fierce attack.

30 ... ♗e3?  
31 ♗c2!

Ensuring the penetration of White's pieces. Black resists well, but Short leaves him no chances.

31 ... ♖a8  
32 a6 ♗b6  
33 axb7+ ♖xb7  
34 dxe5 fxe5  
35 ♖e1 ♗h6  
36 ♗xe5 ♖be7 (106)



37 ♖eb1!  
A Greek gift. If Black takes the proffered knight by 37 ...

♖xe5, then 38 ♗c7 decides the outcome immediately.

37 ... ♖b7  
38 ♗c6 ♗e3  
39 ♗xa7!

The concluding blow, after which Black has no hope left (39 ... ♖xa7 40 ♖xa7+ ♖xa7 41 ♗c7+ ♖a8 is followed not by 42 ♗xb6 ♗e1+, but 42 ♖a1+ with immediate mate).

39 ... ♖b8  
40 ♗c6+ ♖c8  
41 ♗e7++ ♖d8  
42 ♗xd5! 1-0

Black decided that the white knight had danced enough.

**Conclusion**

The line with 4 ... h5?! is extremely dangerous for Black since important positional concessions are made without any tangible gain. As far as practice has shown, White is able to capitalize on his development and space advantage, a well-timed c2-c4 usually being the main idea. Apparently, there is no satisfactory path for Black to equalize, but 7 ... ♗h6 8 0-0 ♗d7 should be tested in serious competition before a final verdict is reached.

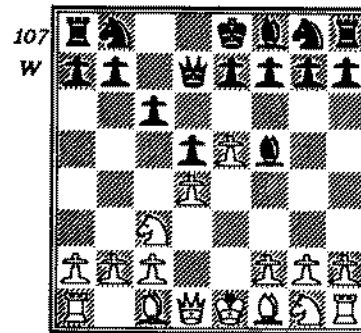
5 The 4 ... ♗d7/c8 Variation

Game 18  
Van der Wiel - Hort  
Wijk aan Zee 1986

1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 e5 ♖f5 4 ♗c3

4 ... ♗d7 (107)

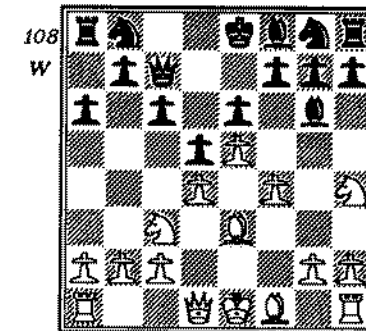
This move has been adopted on a regular basis by GM Vlastimil Hort. Together with 4 ... ♗c8, it serves to prevent g2-g4 without weakening Black's pawn skeleton. Although this plan looks artificial, White has been unable so far to prove a considerable advantage.



5 ♖e3

An alternative that has been tried successfully here is 5 ♗f3. The game Schmittziel-Serrer, German Ch 1991, continued 5 ... e6 6 ♗h4 ♖g6 7 ♖e3

♗c7 8 f4 a6?! (108)



9 f5! ♖xf5 10 ♗xf5 exf5 11 ♖d3 g6 12 g4± ffg4 13 ♗xg4 ♗d7 14 ♗f3 ♖h6 15 0-0-0 ♖xe3+ 16 ♗xe3 ♗e7 17 h4 ♗d7 18 h5 gxh5 19 ♖xh5 0-0-0 20 ♖f5 b5 21 ♗g3 f6 22 ♖e1 ♗f7 23 ♖g4 fxe5 24 dxe5 ♗e7 25 ♗e2 ♖b7 26 ♗f4 ♗f8 27 ♗d3 ♗h6?? 28 ♖xh6 ♗g5+ 29 ♗f4 1-0. However, Black should not have allowed 9 f5 (thus 8 ... ♗e7).

5 ... h6

Nunn-Hort, Lugano 1987, continued 5 ... h5 6 ♗f3 ♗h6 7 h3 e6 8 ♖e2 ♖e7 9 ♗d2 b5 10 ♖g5 a5 11 ♖cl ♗d8 12 a4 b4 13 ♗dl ♗a6 14 0-0 ♖g6 15 ♗f4 ♗f5 16 ♖xe7 ♗xe7 17 ♗e3 ♗b6 18 ♖fd1 0-0-0 19 ♗h4 ♖d7 20 ♗xg6 ♗xg6 21 ♗g5 with White enjoying a slight advantage,

according to Seirawan.

6 h3!?  
6 Qd3!? Qxd3 7 ♗xd3 e6 8 ♖ge2 ♖e7 (8 ... c5 9 dxc5 ♖a6 10 c6! ♗xc6 11 ♖d4±) 9 0-0 ♖f5 10 ♖g3± is a quieter approach.

6 ... e6  
7 g4 Qh7  
8 f4 Qb4

Black declares his intentions: he is planning an harmonious development of his knights to e7 and d7, followed by ... 0-0-0. The only disadvantage of this scheme is that sooner or later Black has to part with his valuable dark-squared bishop.

9 ♖ge2 ♖e7

The theoretical duel between Nunn and Hort had started earlier (Bundesliga 1983/4), with 9 ... ♖a6 10 ♖g3 ♖c7 11 a3 Qe7, also assessed as slightly better for White by Seirawan.

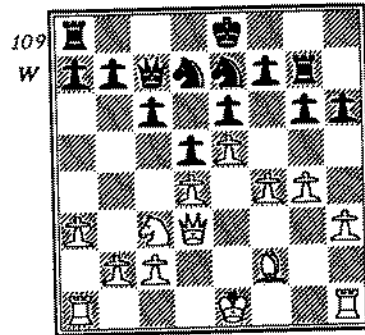
10 a3 Qxc3+  
11 ♖xc3 ♗c7  
12 Qd3

While this surrenders the advantage of the two bishops, it is difficult to find an alternative plan for White. The type of pawn structure suggests that the only way to cause Black serious worries is by enforcing the advance f4-f5.

12 ... ♖d7  
13 Qxh7 ♗xh7  
14 ♗d3 g6  
15 Qf2 ♗g7! (109)

This clever move creates obstacles in White's path but I think that with accurate play

some advantage can still be hoped for.



16 0-0-0

As this does not lead to anything special, I propose here the continuation 16 ♖e2!? (the knight protects g3 in preparation for ♖f2-h4) 16 ... 0-0-0 (on 16 ... c5 White replies 17 dxc5 ♖xc5 18 ♗c3 and now either 18 ... ♖a6 19 ♗xc7 ♖xc7 20 ♖d4 ♖d7 21 a4! with a slight advantage in the ending or 18 ... ♖c8 19 0-0-0 b6 20 ♖g3 with White enjoying some initiative) 17 Qh4 g5 18 f5! gxh4 (18 ... exf5 19 gxf5 gxh4 20 f6 is good for White, but now the point of 16 ♖e2!? is revealed since the move ... ♗g7-g3 is no longer possible) 19 f6 ♗g6 (19 ... ♗f7g8 20 fxe7 ♗de8 21 ♗h7!) 20 fxe7 ♗e8 21 ♗f1! with a slight advantage for White.

16 ... 0-0-0

The position is equal.

17 ♗df1!?

Wrong is 17 Qh4 g5 18 f5? gxh4 19 f6 ♖xf6 20 exf6 ♗f4+, according to the Dutch IM Pieterse.

17 ... a6  
18 Qh4 ♗e8

Black has satisfactory play by simple means, therefore Hort refrains from ideas like 18 ... g5!? 19 f5 ♗gg8 (planning ... c6-c5) with unclear play (Seirawan).

19 f5 gxf5  
20 Qxe7 ♗xe7  
21 gxf5 ♗e8  
22 ♗hg1 ♗xg1  
23 ♗xg1 c5  
24 fxe6 fxe6  
25 ♗g6 Qd8  
26 ♗f7 cxd4  
27 ♗g8 ♗xg8  
28 ♗xg8+ Qe7  
29 ♗h7+ Qd8  
½-½

Game 19

Kotronias - Skembris  
Athens (4th Match Game)  
1987

1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 e5 Qf5 4 ♖c3

4 ... ♗c8

In Timman-Speelman, Reykjavik 1991, Black experimented with 4 ... a6!?, achieving an excellent position after 5 Qe3 ♗c7 6 ♖ge2 e6 7 ♖g3 ♖e7 8 ♖xf5? ♖xf5 9 Qd3 ♖xe3 10 fxe3 c5; although this is given as equal by Seirawan, I believe that White has already ruined his chances, a fact convincingly confirmed by the game continuation: 11 ♗g4 ♖c6 12 0-0-0 0-0-0 13 ♗hf1 h5 14 ♗h4?!

Qe7+ 15 ♗f4? cxd4 16 exd4 f6 17 ♗fel ♖b8 18 Qf1 fxe5 19 dxe5 Qf6-+ 20 g3 Qxe5 21 ♗g5 h4 22 ♗g4 hxg3 23 hxg3 Qxc3 24 bxc3 e5 25 ♗g5 ♗a5 26 ♖b2 ♗h2 27 ♗xe5 ♖xe5 28 ♗xe5+ ♗c7 29 ♗xc7+ ♖xc7 30 ♗d4 g5 31 ♗g4 ♗g8 32 ♗d4 ♗f2 33 Qh3 ♗g6 and 0-1. Nevertheless, 6 Qd3 Qxd3 7 cxd3!? e6 8 ♗c1 is slightly better for White, according to Speelman.

5 Qe3 g6  
6 ♗d2 ♖d7  
7 ♖ge2 h5  
8 ♖g3 Qe6?!

Also bad is 8 ... ♖b6? 9 ♖xf5 ♗xf5 10 b4 (even better than 10 a4!? a5 11 ♗a3 e6 12 ♗b3 Qb4 13 Qd3 ♖c4 14 ♗c1 ♗g4 15 0-0 and the white rook's unusual position on b3 is more of a strength than a weakness, if only because of the unsatisfactory cooperation of Black's forces) 10 ... ♗d7 11 a4 e6 (or 11 ... a5 12 bxa5 ♗xa5 13 e6 fxe6 14 Qd3 with a strong attack for White) 12 a5 ♖c8 13 ♖e2 and the plan ♖e2-f4-d3-c5 guarantees White an advantage. Comparatively best seems 8 ... e6 9 ♖xf5 gxf5 10 ♖e2 c5 11 c3 h4 12 ♖f4 with White enjoying only a small superiority.

9 Qd3 ♖b6  
10 a4 h4  
11 ♖ge2 Qf5?!

Better is 11 ... a5 12 ♗a3 ♗a7 followed by ... ♖b6-a8-c7.

12 a5 ♖c4

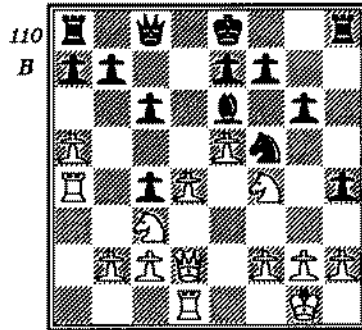
Not 12 ... Qxd3? 13 cxd3 ♖d7

14 e6 and White is already winning.

- 13 ♖xc4 dxc4
- 14 0-0 ♕h6
- 15 ♖a4 ♖e6
- 16 ♖xh6?!

Superior is 16 ♖d1!

- 16 ... ♖xh6
- 17 ♖f4 ♖f5
- 18 ♖d1± (110)



18 ... b5

This is the only move to continue fighting, at least in a practical sense; for example, after 18 ... 0-0? 19 ♖xe6 ♖xe6 20 ♖e2 the game is beyond salvation.

- 19 axb6 axb6
- 20 ♖xa8 ♖xa8
- 21 ♖xe6 fxe6
- 22 ♖e2

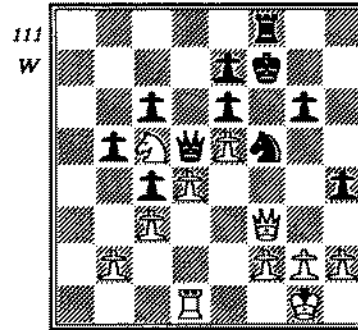
White has a big advantage, but it is still not so easy to bring it home.

- 22 ... b5
- 23 ♖e4 0-0
- 24 ♖g4 ♖g7
- 25 ♖c5 ♖f7
- 26 ♖f3 ♖d8!

Skembris manages to set a few traps, e.g. here 27 ♖xc6?

♖d5 28 ♖xd5 exd5 29 c3 ♖a8 and Black has achieved some counterplay.

27 c3 ♖d5 (111)



28 ♖h3!

With the idea 28 ... ♖a8? 29 g4! hxg3 30 ♖h7+ ♖g7 31 fxg3+-. Black does not have adequate improvements in this variation, for example 29 ... ♖h6 30 ♖e3 or 29 ... ♖g7 30 ♖xh4 planning ♖e1 and ♖e4. Normally the end should be near now, as White conquers the a-file for his rook.

- 28 ... ♖g7
- 29 ♖a1 b4
- 30 ♖g4 bxc3
- 31 bxc3 ♖b8
- 32 h3 ♖b5
- 33 ♖f4 ♖f7
- 34 ♖a7 ♖d8
- 35 ♖e4?

Jeopardizing the win in time trouble. Immediately decisive was 35 ♖g5 (threatening 36 ♖f6+) 35 ... ♖h8 36 ♖xe6 etc.

- 35 ... ♖b1+
- 36 ♖h2 ♖b8
- 37 ♖g5+??

Continuing in the same

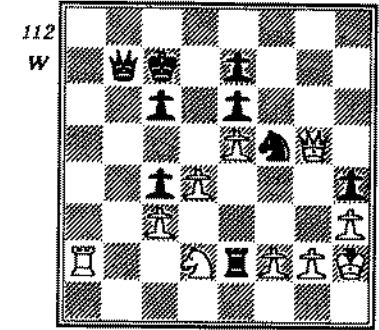
direction; 37 ♖d6+! was enough to achieve the desired objective, e.g. 37 ... ♖g8 38 ♖xe7! ♖xe7 39 ♖f7+ ♖h8 40 ♖f6+ ♖g8 41 ♖xe6+ ♖h8 42 ♖xe7 or 37 ... ♖f8 38 ♖xf5 ♖xa7 39 ♖d6+ with an easily winning position.

- 37 ... ♖e8
- 38 ♖a6 ♖d7
- 39 ♖e4 ♖e1
- 40 ♖d2 ♖b7
- 41 ♖a2+ ♖c7?

White has still kept a considerable advantage, but it was possible to continue fighting through 41 ... ♖e8 42 ♖f3! ♖h1+ (the only serious try) 43 ♖xh1 ♖b1+ 44 ♖h2 ♖xa2 45 ♖g5! ♖d7 46 ♖f3! ♖a5 (the variations 46 ... ♖c2 47 ♖h7 and 46 ... ♖a8 47 ♖e4 ♖e8 48 ♖g4 ♖f7 49 ♖g5+ lose simply) 47 ♖e4 ♖d5 48 ♖g4 and despite White's obvious superiority the game is not over yet.

- 42 ♖g4 g5
- 43 ♖xg5 ♖e2 (112)
- 44 ♖g8! ♖xf2
- 45 ♖xe6 ♖b8

Or 45 ... ♖e3 46 ♖xe7+ ♖c8



47 ♖xb7+ ♖xb7 48 ♖b2+ ♖c7 49 ♖xc4 etc.

46 d5

The rest is pretty clear.

- 46 ... cxd5
- 47 ♖xd5 ♖b6
- 48 ♖xc4 1-0

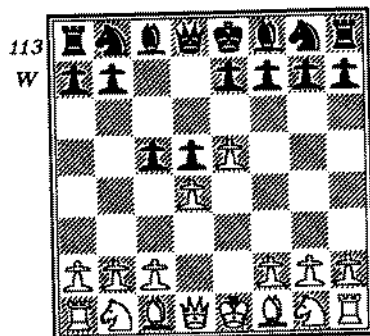
### Conclusion

Black's 4th move alternatives are not to be taken lightly; nothing has been refuted and nothing has been explored well. However, Speelman's 4 ... a6!? looks more useful than 4 ... ♖d7/c8, and only further encounters can show what is the best plan for White.

## 6 The 3 ... c5 Variation

Game 20  
Tal - Botvinnik  
Moscow (8th Match Game)  
1961

1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 e5  
3 ... c5 (113)



This move became fashionable in the early 1960s when Botvinnik employed it in several World Championship games against Tal. Nowadays it is a rare bird in tournament practice since it has been long established that White can get an advantage in a variety of ways.

4 dxc5 e6

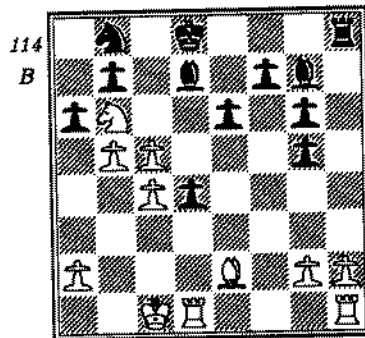
For 4 ... c6 see Game 21.

5 g4!

Some old analysis by Boleslavsky runs 5 Qe3! e7 6 c3 f5 7 Qd4 and now after either

7 ... Bc7 8 Qd3 Qxc5 9 Qxc5 Bxc5 10 Qxf5 exf5 11 f3 c6 12.0-0 0-0 13 bbd2 or 7 ... Qxd4 8 cxd4 b6 9 b4 a5 10 Qb5 Qd7 11 Ba4 White's superiority is evident.

In the 4th game of the same match Tal explored 5 c3, but the result was less successful: 5 ... c6 6 Qf4 Qge7 7 f3 Qg6 8 Qe3 Qxe5 9 Qxe5 Qxe5 10 Bh5 c6 11 0-0-0 Qe7 12 f4 g6 13 Bh6 Qf8 14 Qg5 Qxg5 15 fxg5 h6 16 Qa4 Qd7 17 Qf4 a6 18 Qb6 Bb8 19 Qc7 hxg5 20 c4 d4 21 b4 Qg7 22 Qxd8 Qxd8 23 b5 Qb8 24 Qe2 (114)



24 ... f5 25 Qf3 axb5 26 cxb5 Qxb5 27 Qxb7 Qc7 28 a4 Qxa4 29 Qxa4 Qxb7 30 Qd2 Qd7 31 Bb1+ Qc6 32 Bhc1 Qe5 33 Qd3 Ba8 34 Bb6+ Qxb6 35 cxb6+

Qd7 36 Qc5+ Qe7 37 Bb1 Ba3+ 38 Qc4 Qc3+ 39 Qb5 Bb3 40 Ba1 Qxh2 41 Ba7+ Qe8 and 1/2-1/2. My conclusion is that 5 c3 is rather inconsistent and worthless from the theoretical point of view.

5 ... c6

5 ... h5! is a likely improvement here, so Boleslavsky's analysis is more to be trusted. It is also possible to regain the pawn immediately with 5 ... Qd7 6 Qb5 Bc7. The text is a dubious idea which underestimates White's tactical possibilities.

6 Qf3 Bc7

7 Qb5 Qd7

8 Qxc6!

White's position contains many strongpoints to compensate for the bishop pair. Black's tempo loss in the opening allows Tal to carry out typically Nimzowitschian ideas in exemplary fashion.

8 ... Bxc6

9 Qe3

White not only has an extra pawn but is also ahead in development. Therefore Botvinnik decides to regain the material at the cost of deteriorating his pawn structure.

9 ... Qh6

10 Qxh6!

The second bishop goes, but White has correctly judged that in the resulting position Black cannot effectively use his bishops because of his back-

ward development. On the contrary, the white knights have excellent squares from which to operate.

10 ... gxh6

The advantage of the open g-file is offset by the insecurity of the black king and the weakened pawn structure. Practically, Black is facing insurmountable problems in such positions.

11 Qbd2 Bxc5

12 c4!

Predicting ... 0-0-0, Tal is quick to open up the game. White's central control guarantees that Black's bishops will not be dangerous.

12 ... 0-0-0

13 0-0 Qb8

14 Bfd1 Bb6

15 Bh4!

Tal is piling on the pressure with quiet moves. The text keeps an eye on d8 and h6, while at the same time protecting his own potential weakness on f2. It should be noted that the light-squared bishop's future is also hampered since the valuable e7 square is also controlled.

15 ... a5

Trying to blockade the queenside, but the impression is that this rather invites White to attack. Preferable is 15 ... Be8 or 15 ... Bg8 when Black can still fight.

16 Bb1 Bg8

The game continuation

suggests that immediately 16 ... a4 was better.

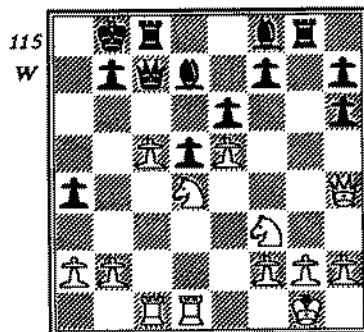
17 ♖b3 a4

Black cannot play 17 ... dxc4 18 ♖xc4 when the pin on the d-file will win material for White. However, it was possible to open up the game for the bishops with 17 ... ♖c8 18 cxd5 ♖xc1 19 ♖xc1 exd5 20 ♖xd5 ♖c6 and Black keeps some practical hopes alive.

18 c5

This move creates the kind of semi-blocked position which reveals the power of knights over bishops; taking advantage of the strongpoint at d4, White can expand on the queenside at will.

18 ... ♖c7  
19 ♖bd4 ♖c8 (115)



20 b4 axb3  
21 axb3 ♖d8

Botvinnik tries to take the sting out of White's attack by exchanging queens, but here White is so superbly placed that he can happily agree to this. Anyway, Black could hardly find anything better in

view of his miserable king position and White's queenside pawn majority.

22 ♖xd8 ♖xd8  
23 b4 ♖g4  
24 b5 ♖c8  
25 c6

White's forceful pawn advance, aided by his whole army, cannot be stopped by Black. The most important rôle is played by the knight on d4, a superb blockader.

26 ♖c2 ♖g7

The bishop's entrance to the game comes too late to change the outcome. White's forces on the queenside are already poised to deliver the knock-out blow and the a-file is about to have its say.

27 ♖a1 ♖xe5?

27 ... ♖xd4 was the only way to prolong resistance, but White still wins after 28 ♖xd4 ♖xe5 29 ♖ca2! ♖xd4 30 ♖a8+ ♖c7 31 ♖xc8+ ♖xc8 32 ♖a8+ ♖c7 33 cxb7 etc.

28 ♖xe5 ♖xd4  
29 ♖d7+! 1-0

Not waiting for 29 ... ♖xd7 (even worse is 29 ... ♖c7 30 b6+ ♖d8 31 cxb7) 30 cxd7 ♖d8 31 ♖c8+! ♖xc8 32 ♖a8+! when White sweeps away the whole black army at one stroke.

Game 21  
Shabalov - K. Arkell  
London 1991

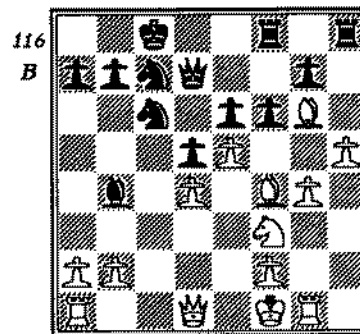
1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 e5

3 ... c5

At this point, Black's lesser alternatives are, to say the least, dubious. For the sake of completeness we shall take a quick look at one of them:

a) 3 ... ♖a6?! (what is the idea?), after which I recommend 4 ♖d2 ♖b6 (4 ... ♖c7 5 ♖d3±) 5 c3 (with the idea b2-b4) 5 ... c5 6 dxc5 ♖xc5 7 ♖b3 ♖xb3 8 axb3 and White is clearly better.

Against 3 ... ♖a6 Nunn has twice essayed the immediate 4 c3 with good results. The game Nunn-Nikolac, Bundesliga 1984, continued 4 ... ♖f5 5 ♖e2 e6 6 ♖f4 ♖e7 7 ♖d2 ♖c7 8 g4 ♖g6 9 h4 f6 10 ♖xg6 hxg6 11 ♖f3 ♖d7 12 ♖g1 0-0-0 13 ♖d3 c5 14 ♖f4 cxd4 15 cxd4 ♖c6 16 ♖xg6 ♖b4+ 17 ♖f1 ♖df8 18 h5 (116)



18 ... fxe5 19 ♖xe5 ♖xe5 20 ♖xe5 ♖d6 21 ♖e2 ♖xe5 22 ♖xe5 ♖b5+ 23 ♖g2 ♖xb2 24 ♖gf1 ♖a3 25 f4 ♖e7 26 ♖a1 ♖d8 27 f5 ♖d6 28 fxe6 ♖xe5 29 dxe5 ♖b8 30 e7 ♖dg8 31 ♖f7 ♖c8 32 g5 d4 33 ♖fd1 and 1-0, while Nunn-K.

Arkell, London 1990, saw 4 ... ♖c7 5 ♖e2 (5 ♖d3 g6 6 ♖d2 (6 ♖f3!?) 6 ... h5 7 ♖f1 (7 ♖df3!?) 7 ... ♖h6 8 ♖a3 ♖g4 9 ♖f3 ♖xe3 10 fxe3 ♖f5= was van der Wiel-Kavalek, Wijk aan Zee 1982, but White could keep a slight advantage with 10 ♖xe3, according to Seirawan) 5 ... g6 6 ♖g3 ♖h6 7 ♖d2 ♖g4 8 f3 ♖d7 9 f4 ♖e6 10 ♖f3 ♖g7 11 h3 ♖hf5 12 ♖xf5 ♖xf5 13 g4 ♖e4 14 ♖g1 f5 15 ♖g5 e6 16 ♖b3 ♖d7 17 ♖e3 ♖e7 18 ♖xe4 fxe4 19 0-0-0 0-0-0 20 c4 ♖b8 21 c5 with a clear advantage for White, according to Speelman, although Black eventually managed to draw.

4 dxc5 ♖c6  
5 ♖b5

This is Boleslavsky's suggestion, while inferior seems 5 ♖f3, after which the game Kirov-K. Arkell, Leningrad 1989, progressed as follows: 5 ... ♖g4 6 ♖b5 ♖a5+ 7 ♖c3 e6 8 ♖e3 a6 9 ♖xc6+ bxc6 10 a3 ♖xf3 11 ♖xf3 ♖xc5 12 0-0 ♖xe3 13 ♖xe3 ♖e7 14 b4 ♖c7 15 ♖a4 a5 16 ♖c5 0-0 17 ♖b3 axb4 18 axb4 ♖f5 19 ♖c3 ♖b6 20 ♖xa8 ♖xa8 21 ♖a1 ♖xa1+ 22 ♖xa1 ♖xb4 23 ♖a8+ ♖f8 24 ♖xc6 h5 with a slight advantage for Black (eventually converted to a win after another 24 moves).

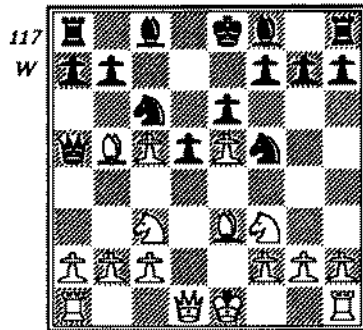
5 ... ♖a5+  
6 ♖c3 e6  
7 ♖e3 ♖e7

The old analysis by Boleslavsky runs 7 ... ♖d7 8 ♖f3



(also interesting is Pachman's 8 Qxc6 Qxc6 9 f3 Qxc5 10 Qxc5 Bxc5 11 d4± - see Chapter 1, diagram 18) 8 ... e5 (8 ... e7 9 a3 g6 10 Qxc6 Qxc6 11 d4±) 9 e5 Qxb5 10 h5 g6 11 xg6 f6 12 h4 e4 13 xf8 and White has a clear plus.

8 f3 f5 (117)



9 a3±

As often happens in the Caro Advance, the specific requirements of the position demand that White spoil his pawn formation; in compensation, the dynamism of his position increases considerably. And just have a look at the c8-bishop, which Black's very first move planned to liberate!

9 ... e3  
10 fxe3 Bc7  
11 e4

A most unusual break by White in this variation, all the more effective for this reason.

11 ... dx4  
12 e4 Qxc5

Black has no option, but forcing tactics from a position

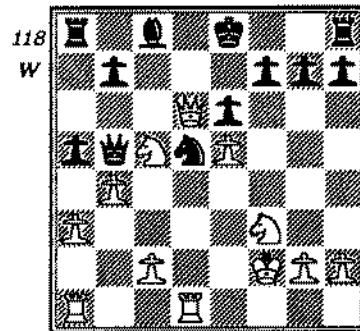
with fewer developed pieces can only lead to a hopeless situation.

13 e5 a5+  
14 b4 Bxb5  
15 d6 a5

Useless action, since opening up the a-file would only benefit White. Although he could hardly hope to save himself in the long run, Black's best was to initiate the plan he chooses next move by 15 ... e7, e.g. 16 d1 Bb6 with just a few practical chances.

16 f2 e7  
17 hdl d5 (118)

Now 17 ... Bb6 is impossible, but Black has deluded himself that he has built a fortress.



18 c4!

Such blows almost always exist in the Caro Advance when White has a lead in development.

18 ... Bxc4  
19 aac1 a2+  
20 g3

As if to demonstrate Black's inability to undertake anything even resembling counterplay.

20 ... axb4

21 e6

The final conclusive blow, threatening above all 22 xd5.

21 ... bxa6

22 c7 1-0

Black is not given any hope with 22 c6+, while now the renewed threat 23 xd5 spells the end.

## Index of Complete Games

(Main Games in italics)

Borge-K. Berg, Espergaerde 1992	83
Forster-Lyrberg, Guarapuava 1991	56
Gazis-Makropoulos, Greek Ch (Xilokastro) 1985	42
Hendriks-Walker, European corr. Ch 1990	68
Hort-Seirawan, Bad Kissingen 1981	48
Kamsky-Miles, New York 1989	35
Korolev-Kastarnov, corr.1986	49
Kotliar-Retter, Israel 1986	51
<i>Kotronias-Campora, Moscow 1989</i>	59
<i>Kotronias-Khalifman, Moscow 1987</i>	86
<i>Kotronias-King, New York 1990</i>	82
Kotronias-Orr, Dubai OL 1986	89
<i>Kotronias-Sax, Elenite 1992</i>	37
<i>Kotronias-Skembris, Athens (m/4) 1987</i>	99
<i>Kotronias-Speelman, New York 1990</i>	74
<i>Kotronias-Tukmakov, Kavala 1991</i>	88
Lassen-Bergmann, Danish League 1991/2	83
Lee-Pieterse, Dieren 1989	33
Leuw-Groszpeter, Katerini 1992	43
<i>Marjanovic-Campora, Nis 1985</i>	41
<i>Minasian-Miles, Moscow 1989</i>	34
Moore-Mills, USA 1984	50
<i>Nagel-Wouters, corr. 1988</i>	46
<i>Nimzowitsch-Capablanca, New York 1927</i>	79
<i>Nunn-Dlugy, London 1986</i>	92
Nunn-Nikolac, Bundesliga 1984	105
Nunn-Seirawan, Lugano 1983	67
Prasad-Ravi, India 1991	69
Sax-Korchnoi, Tilburg 1989	38
Schmittziel-Serrer, German Ch 1991	97
<i>Shabalov-K. Arkel, London Lloyds Bank 1991</i>	104

## Index of Partial Games 109

<i>Short-Seirawan, Rotterdam 1989</i>	94
A. Sokolov-Karpov, Linares Ct (9) 1987	68
Stavrev-Slavov, Bulgarian Ch (Pazardzhik) 1991	38
Tal-Botvinnik, Moscow Wch (4) 1961	102
<i>Tal-Botvinnik, Moscow Wch (8) 1961</i>	102
Timman-Anand, Amsterdam 1992	37
<i>Timman-Karpov, Belfort 1988</i>	62
Timman-Karpov, Djakarta Wch (17) 1993	57
Timman-Seirawan, Tilburg 1990	75
<i>Timman-Seirawan, Hilversum (m/2) 1990</i>	66
<i>Timman-Seirawan, Hilversum (m/4) 1990</i>	55
Timman-Speelman, Reykjavik 1991	99
<i>van der Wiel-Hort, Wijk aan Zee 1986</i>	97
<i>van der Wiel-Icklicki, Brussels 1985</i>	52
van der Wiel-Miles, Ter Apel 1987	35
van der Wiel-Speelman, Wijk aan Zee 1983	49
van der Wiel-Timman, Amsterdam 1987	44
<i>Vasiukov-Razuvaev, USSR 1981</i>	31
Westerinen-Adianto, Thessaloniki OL 1988	51
Yudasin-Seirawan, Jacksonville 1990	59

## Index of Partial Games

Bastriakov-Averbakh, USSR 1952	86
Blumenfeld-Kasparian, USSR 1931	32
Djurhuus-Fossan, Stavanger 1989	33
Dos Santos-Wallace, Guarapuava 1991	32
Efimov-Vdovin, USSR 1980	38
Glek-Vyzhmanavin, Lvov 1985	93
Kengis-Kivlan, USSR 1979	47
Kinlay-Friedman, England 1980	38
Kirov-K.Arkel, Leningrad 1989	105
Klinger-Hodgson, Oakham 1984	83
Korchnoi-Byvshev, USSR 1951	59
Kotronias-K. Berg, Gausdal Troll Masters 1993	90
Kotronias-Gausel, Reykjavik 1988	79
Kotronias-Halldorson, Reykjavik 1988	87
Kotronias-Skembris, Kavala zt 1985	87
Kotronias-Skembris, Athens (m/2) 1987	44
Kotronias-Theoharis, Athens simul 1992	63
Marjanovic-Skembris, Pucarevo Z 1987	38

Mokry-Pedersen, Groningen 1977/78	87
Moutousis-K. Nikolaidis, Greek Ch (Athens) 1988	39
Nagel-Gebhardt, corr. 1989	49
Nunn-Andersson, London 1982	38
Nunn-K. Arkell, London 1990	105
Nunn-Chandler, Wiesbaden 1981	34
Nunn-Hort, Lugano 1987	97
Nunn-Wells, Chichester 1984	50
Palamidas-Kourkounakis, Athens 1991	62
Papatheodorou-Kourkounakis, Athens 1992	59
Sax-Vadasz, Hungary 1984	49
Shabalov-Adianto, New York Open 1993	46
Timman-Kamsky, Tilburg 1990	83
van der Wiel-Messa, Graz 1981	43
Ufimtsev-Ravkin, USSR 1961	84
Westerinen-Groszpeter, Copenhagen 1988	39
Zapolskis-Furdzik, Chrudim 1992	36

## Index of Variations

1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 e5
3 ... ♗a6?! 105
3 ... c5 4 dxc5
4 ... e6 102
4 ... ♗c6 104
3 ... ♕f5 4 ♗c3
4 ... a6 99
4 ... ♖d7 97
4 ... ♖c8 99
4 ... h5 5 ♕d3 ♕xd3 6 ♖xd3 e6 7 ♗f3
7 ... ♗h6 92
7 ... ♖b6 94
4 ... ♖b6 5 ♕d3 (5 g4 82) 5 ... ♕xd3 (5 ... ♖xd4 83)
6 ♖xd3 e6 7 ♗ge2
7 ... ♗e7 8 0-0
8 ... ♖a6 87
8 ... ♗d7 9 a4
9 ... c5 84
9 ... a5 89
9 ... a6 89
4 ... e6 5 g4 ♕g6 6 ♗ge2
6 ... ♖h4?! 32
6 ... ♕b4 31
6 ... ♕e7 34
6 ... f6 7 h4 (7 ♗f4 37) 7 ... fxe5 (7 ... ♗d7 38)
8 h5 ♕f7 9 dxe5
9 ... ♕e7? 39
9 ... ♕b4 39
9 ... ♗d7 41
6 ... c5 7 h4 (7 ♕e3 46)
7 ... f6 48
7 ... cxd4?! 48
7 ... h5 8 ♗f4

112 *Index of Variations*

- 8 ... Qh7 53
- 8 ... Qc6 55
- 7 ... h6
  - 8 Qf4 59
  - 8 h5?! 59
  - 8 Qe3!
    - 8 ... Qc6?! 62
    - 8 ... Bb6! 66
    - 8 ... cxd4 74